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MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS.

MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS;

THEIR

ORIGIN, PROGRESS, NATURE, AND TENDENCY.

BY

SAMUEL PHILLIPS DAY,

**LATELY CONNECTED WITH THE MONASTERY OF THE PRESENTATION ORDER
AT TONGHAL.**

**WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY A CLERGYMAN OF
THE CHURCH OF IRELAND.**

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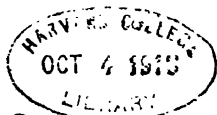
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P. DIXON HARDY AND SONS.

LONDON: LONGMAN AND CO.; B. GROOMBRIDGE.

1844.

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DUBLIN: PRINTED BY P. DIXON HARDY AND SONS, SACKVILLE-STREET.

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TO
The Clergy of the Church of Ireland,
THE UNCOMPROMISING DEFENDERS AND STRENOUOUS UPHOLDERS
OF THE
"FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS,"
THIS HUMBLE ATTEMPT
TO DELINEATE THE FEATURES OF MONACHISM,
IS, AS A TOKEN OF ESTEEM,
MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED, PRESENTED, AND INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR FAITHFUL AND DEVOTED SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E.

ABOUT nineteen years ago, the Abbé F. De La Mennais published a work in Paris, entitled, "De la religion, considérée dans ses rapports avec l'ordre politique et civile." In it he speaks of the determination of the French government, with respect to monastic vows and establishments, and he complains of the constituted authorities refusing to sanction or legalize vows of monastic seclusion, celibacy, mortification, and obedience. The Church was thus restrained from enforcing those obligations, which have occasioned so much idleness, vice, and misery, in the world; and have proved in all ages one of the firmest props of papal delusion and imposture. The evils resulting from monastic vows and imposed clerical celibacy, are notorious and

appalling; and we cannot but applaud the wisdom and firmness of the French government of that day, for determining to withhold from the priesthood the power of perniciously tampering with the consciences of men. It restrained these clerical despots from practising upon the ardent feelings of the young and inexperienced, especially among the female sex, and from rendering men generally useless as members of society; often miserable, and sometimes guilty to a greater extent, than a more unrestrained commerce with the world would make them. The state did not prohibit individuals from taking upon themselves, or from keeping, as many religious obligations as they pleased. Its maxim was, "*L'état ne s'en mêlera pas: ce sont là des choses d'un ordre plus élevé qui se passeront entre la conscience et Dieu.*" But fully convinced that the pretended solitude of the cloister had been witness to as much real wretchedness, as much secret guilt, as much spiritual, aye, and actual, substantial wickedness, as the scenes of public life, it was considered an act of sound policy to put a

restraint on these dens of iniquity. Is the monastic system so pure and undefiled in Ireland that it does not stand in need of the same refining process? Let the following pages, coming from the pen of one, who could indeed say—“*Quorum pars magna fui*,” decide. If they are to be sanctioned, they ought, at least, to be placed under legislative control, so as to prevent their being rendered an instrument of injustice, oppression, and spiritual tyranny. If there is any reasonable cause for apprehending that secrecy is connected in any case with coercion, there is ground for the exertion of legislative vigilance. Mr. DAY, the writer of the following pages, has done the state some service, in calling public attention to “Monastic Institutions;” and his “Treatise” is entitled to respect, inasmuch as he bears an unsullied character, and his late connection with the Monastery of the Presentation Order, at Youghal, gave him opportunities, under very favorable circumstances, of being well acquainted with all the *arcana* of monachism, and the discipline to which the members of the order are subjected.

At a time like the present, when Liberalism has become infused into Protestantism, giving it a neutral or an unnatural complexion—when Romanism and Tractarianism are going hand in hand, and working with all the attachment and affection of brotherhood—“*par nobile fratrum*”—the one, in establishing and upholding, the other, in countenancing and “insisting upon the restoration of monastic institutions,”—a work, giving an account of the origin, progress, and character, of the monastic state, cannot be considered ill-timed or unseasonable. Mr. DAY relates a plain, unvarnished tale, simple in its statements, and unassuming in its pretensions. I have read the following pages with attention, carefully examined the facts narrated, and the principles developed, and inquired how far the writer is entitled to respect. The impression left upon my mind is, that he is perfectly conversant with the subject he has taken in hand, and that he has seceded from the ranks of the apostacy with a character, even above suspicion. This little work may be considered rather in the light of a *vade mecum* to mona-

chism than a history of the several orders, which rank under the denomination of "Religious Houses." But brief and condensed though it be, it is calculated to awaken attention to a subject big with importance, and involving interests of far greater moment than the pursuits and concerns of this passing scene. Within a very short period not a few of the priests of Rome have become "obedient to the faith;" and it is devoutly to be wished that this secession may be the first fruits of a greater "falling away" from the ranks of Popery. "My heart's desire and prayer to God" for the deluded disciples of Romanism "is, that they might be saved;" and that many a dark and benighted Romanist, whether lay or clerical, buried in a cloister or familiar with human intercourse, may have the moral courage to burst the shackles of spiritual tyranny, and to shake off the trammels of spiritual despotism, under a solemn conviction, that true Christian liberty is not to be found within the range of that unscriptural system, which emanates from Rome! Already does Romanism exhibit signs of decay in Ireland;

and the "Man of Sin," though gorged with wealth and fostered by power, assumes an appearance giving symptoms of approaching ruin. Grasping at omnipotence, bound by no principles, and restrained by no ties, the unsightly monster is tottering on its base, and when the word goes forth from the mouth of HIM, who says, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther," it will fall, never to rise again; leaving no trace of its previous existence behind, but in the crimes to which it has given birth, and the miseries it has created. The signs of the times are sounding the note of preparation; they seem to be the forerunner of a day of "emancipation" worthy of the name; a deliverance from ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, and a prelude to an abundant admission "into the glorious liberty of the children of God!" The Jesuits, the favourite children of the Church of Rome, "those skilful rowers," as a Pope called them, were never so busy in their vocation as at the present moment, taking advantage of the patronage of men in high places, and striving to turn to profit the unfaithfulness of *soi-*

disant Protestants. None of these things need move us, for although they are without doubt a powerful body, yet He, "in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind," is *all-powerful*—"THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH!"

May this humble attempt to expose the evils attendant on monachism be instrumental in causing many to come out from the corrupt Church of Rome! May they have grace given them to throw off the heavy burthens, which priestly dominion has, without a scriptural warrant, imposed on them! And may the writer himself of the following pages, having "escaped the corruption" destructive of men's souls, enjoy the blessed influences of God the Holy Spirit, and grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

C. H. MINCHIN, A.M.

Dublin, September, 1844.

MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF MONASTICISM.

“Like many other great institutions, monachism may be traced to accidental circumstances. Men fled into the wilderness to escape from persecution, and some of them remained in solitude till they had lost all appetite or aptitude for social life.”

THE principle that induced the early Christians to separate themselves from the world, and seek the solitary shade, has probably been owing to the relentless persecution which assailed and threatened them; probably to the enthusiasm which their over-zeal for “the faith” had elicited; or, perhaps, they acted under the influence of the two-fold feeling; though the latter would appear to be the more correct, especially as they are

described by Pliny to have been as invulnerable against the fear of death as the Stoics were. These ascetics dwelt among the palm-trees, near the Dead Sea, though not so near as to inhale the noxious exhalations which arise from the lake, nigh to the towns of Engaddi and Masada.

Egypt, within whose prolific womb superstition had been conceived, and upon whose breast it had been nourished and matured, afforded the first instance of strict Monastic life, in the celebrated Anthony, the hermit, who was born in Thebais, A.D. 251.* This extraordinary and unlettered youth, deserting the spot of his nativity, and remaining for a considerable period within the ruins of a tower and among the tombs, where he performed rigorous penances and mortifications,

* "One of Anthony's sayings was—'He who abideth in solitude is delivered from the three-fold warfare of hearing, speaking, and seeing, and has only to support the combat against his own heart.' This combat, however, he himself found it so difficult to sustain, that in an hour of distress he cried to the Lord, asking how he should be saved? 'Presently,' says the legend, 'he saw one in the likeness of himself, who sat at work, and anon rose from his work and prayed, and then sat down again to twist a rope of the fibres of the palm, and after a while, rose and prayed again. It was the angel of the Lord—'Do this,' said the angel, 'and thou shalt be saved.'"—*Quar. Rev. July, 1819.*

travelled into the desert a few days' journey eastward of the Nile; and discovering, in that locality, a spot possessing a wildness of scenery peculiarly adapted to his romantic taste, and convenient to a spring of water, fixed his final habitation upon the Mount of Colzim, adjacent to the Red Sea, A. D. 305, where it is said, by the Jesuit Sicard,* an ancient monastery still retains his name.

Although it has been affirmed and believed by the ancients, as well as the moderns, that Anthony was grossly ignorant, yet the historian Tillemont considers this statement to be unfounded, and describes him to be acquainted with reading and writing in the Coptic, his native tongue, and only ignorant in respect to his acquaintance with Greek. Even the philosopher Synisius eulogises the natural genius of Anthony, and asserts "that he did not require the aid of learning."

Upon this bleak and lonely mountain, Anthony did not exist unknown, although apparently debarred from all human intercourse; nor was he without followers and admirers. Hence, this strange fanaticism spread beyond conception—his lessons and example becoming the great

* Missions in the Levant.

magnet of attraction to which thousands of those whom novelty had but first enticed, adhered beyond the possibility of being repelled. Whole colonies of monks were, therefore, soon discoverable about the rocks of Thebais, the sands of Lybia, and the cities of the Nile; even south of Alexandria the mountains and adjacent desert of Nitria* were peopled with no less than five thousand anchorites; and travellers have observed the ruins of fifty monasteries which were established in those places by Anthony's disciples. The Jesuit Sicard visited this desert, and discovered there four monastic establishments, and

* One Ammon, who persuaded his wife to renounce with him a secular life, retired to the mountain of Nitria, and for a limited period inhabited together one common ascetic apartment. This not being pleasing, however, to the chaste bride, she one day addressed Ammon thus—"It is unsuitable for you, who profess chastity, to look upon a woman in so confined a dwelling; let us, therefore, if it is agreeable to you, perform our exercise apart." Each party accordingly agreed, and spent the remainder of their lives in abstinence from wine and oil. eating dry bread alone, and, on some occasions, passing over several days together without food. Ammon once required to cross a river, but being so modest as not to undress, he besought the Lord to enable him to get over without being necessitated to break his resolution; and immediately an angel transported him to the other side!—*Socrates's Eccles. Hist. lib. 4, c. xxiii. p. 328, 329.*

twenty or thirty monks. Anthony's disciples subsequently dispersed themselves over the Ethiopian empire.

The island of Tabenne, in the Nile, situate between the modern town of Girge and the ruins of ancient Thebes, was inhabited by Pachomius, another supernaturally-gifted founder, and about fourteen hundred followers. This saint, in order that he might sleep little, and with the least possible comfort or convenience, never allowed himself to lie down, nor even to recline against anything which might support him, but sat upon a stone in the middle of his cell. And among the rules which (according to the historians of the lying Church of Rome) were given to him by an angel, and were the first code of monastic laws, was one whereby the monks were enjoined to sleep sitting, and not recumbent. This renowned abbot founded nine monasteries for men, and, cruel to relate, one for women. Frequently on festival days would be congregated together fifty thousand individuals, who adopted his austere and rigid rule of discipline.

Impelled both by the example of Anthony and his own innate love of solitude, Hilarion, a Syrian youth, established monachism in Palestine, A.D. 328, and took up his abode upon a sandy beach,

a few miles distant from Gaza. Soon, indeed, did his fame become commensurate with that of Anthony; for, when on his occasional visitations of the several monasteries in Palestine, he was invariably accompanied by a vast procession, comprising no less than two or three thousand anchorites. This founder prosecuted a course of severe discipline for the space of forty-eight years.

In Rome this system was introduced and propagated by Athanasius, A.D. 341, and a few Egyptian monks, whose revolting and horrifying aspect created for a time, and justly, contempt and ridicule; but, strange to say, these feelings were afterwards overcome, and followed by emulation and esteem.

The celebrated and ambitious Basil established a monastery in Pontus, A.D. 366, in a dreary solitude, where he governed for a period his followers, who were dispersed along the coast of the Black Sea.

Martin of Tours, who had been both a warrior and a bishop, founded several monasteries in Gaul, A.D. 370, and had some thousands of disciples, many of whom chose for their exile the bleak and rugged islands that are studded over the Tuscan Sea.

The monastery of Banchor, in Flintshire, which contained about two thousand monks, introduced themselves into Ireland; and the Irish monks, at a subsequent period, dispersed themselves over the northern regions. Thus we behold a system, hateful as it must be in the sight of God, and revolting as it is to the social feelings of man, spreading itself over the earth, and, in its flight, carrying spiritual ruin and desolation along with it.

CHAPTER II.

CAUSES OF THE RAPID INCREASE OF MONASTERIES— MODE OF LIVING, VOWS, AND WEALTH OF THE EARLY MONKS.

"The Eremitical life is contrary to the nature of man when it was uncorrupt, for whom it was not judged good to be alone. As the solitary life is an enemy to mankind, (Gen. ii.) so it is to the communion of saints in the Church of God. (Mat. v. 15.) The example of the primitive church is against it (Acts ii. 44.); and the uncleanest and most hateful birds covet desolate places."—CARTER ON MAT. iii. 1.

THE causes of their rapid increase may be traced to a three-fold source—example, ignorance of the faith, and sinister views. The powerful effect of example may be easily conceived when we consider the popularity which the first propagators of this new system had attained. The spread of their apparently extraordinary miracles and physical combatings with spirits of darkness, must have had a powerful tendency in inducing individuals, in the slightest degree credulous, to embrace a state, to all human appearance, so

specially and signally marked with the favour of heaven. Again, *here* was each proselyte taught, that penances, mortifications, and humiliations, freely engaged in, and a world voluntarily renounced, were the steps of the spiritual ladder by which they were to ascend to the gates of Zion. The eloquent Chrysostom, Bishop of Constanti-
nople, who had been a monk antecedent to his receiving the mitre, encouraged the monks to believe that they were the "elect;" and that the monastic cell was the type of the ark, "out of which salvation was impossible." He even dedi- / cated no less than three books to the praise of a monastic life; but ultimately he received a poor reward for all his ill-bestowed panegyrics. Those very individuals, on whom he lavished such praises, afterwards became his most bitter and adverse enemies, and were the special instruments in procuring his perpetual banishment to Cucusus, a city of Cilicia, where he died about three years afterwards.* Thus was Chrysostom rewarded for his adulatory epistles, by the black-garbled monks of Cappadocia.

Sinister views and personal motives also wrought

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. c. iii. p. 54.

powerfully in peopling the lonely deserts and the barren wilds with monks and hermits; "for hither, as to a common asylum, men broken in mind, in fortune, and in fame, betook themselves; the friendless, the disappointed, the criminal, who fled from public justice, and the innocent, who sought shelter from oppression." * Vanity, and a desire of emulation, accidental misfortunes, and even ambition, acted as strong incentives; for not unfrequently have instances been recorded of the emaciated and austere hermit being endowed with the highest civil authority,† as well as elevated to the episcopal chair; and it is notorious that the monasteries of the East, of Egypt,

* Platina has termed the monastic life, "Unicum calamitosorum refugium."

† "Nothing," says Dr. Mosheim, "affords such a striking and remarkable proof of the excessive and fanatical veneration that was paid to the monastic order, as the treatment they received from several kings and emperors, who drew numbers of monks and abbots from their cloisters, and placed them in stations entirely foreign to their vows and their character, even amidst the splendour of a court, and at the head of affairs. The transition, indeed, was violent, from the obscurity of a convent, and the study of a liturgy, to sit at the helm of an empire, and manage the political interests of nations." —*Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. lib. iii. cent. ix. p. 301.

and of Gaul, supplied numerous candidates for that dignified office.* Hence, it can safely be affirmed, that sinister views and interested motives, gave a sweetness to mortification, an agreeableness to solitude, and an intrepidity to the mind, divested of whose influences, many of those unhappy beings would, in all probability, have yielded to despair, and put a termination to an existence, at best but a living death. Several fled to these monasteries whose circumstances became embarrassed by oppression; and a vast number of individuals, whom the horrors of war had intimidated, found a most desirable refuge in these asylums. They were content to endure privations, painful to flesh and blood, which the fear of dying by the hands of ruthless barbarians could alone have alleviated, or rendered supportable.

The cells or dwellings of these monks were low and narrow (unlike the fine and spacious apartments of our modern recluses), and built of slight materials; even the most devoted amongst them, in order to increase their sufferings, would not afford themselves space sufficient to stand erect, or to extend their bodies, thinking it a merit to pass their days and nights in a sitting posture.

* Sulpitius Severus, *De vita Martini*, cap. x. p. 320, *Dial*, i. cap. xxi. p. 426.

The Egyptian monks generally carried their abstemiousness to a very great extent. Both Anthony, Pachomius, and their disciples, would take no more than twelve ounces of bread, or biscuit, for their daily sustenance, which limited quantity they divided into two meals; and we are informed that Mecarius, of Alexandria,* ate nothing during lent but herbs, and then but once a week; that in Pontus, as Gregory Nazianzen testifies, some fasted twenty days and nights together; that Paul, the first hermit, lived upon the fruit of a palm-tree and a piece of bread, supplied to him every day by a raven, which quantity

* This saintly devotee having one day killed a gnat which had bitten him, was struck with compunction at the sight of this insect's blood, and, by way of atonement, went into the marshes, and there, for six months, exposed himself to all winged and creeping insects, until every part of his flesh was swollen and ulcerated with their bites! Sozomen relates of him, that he had so hardened his body by austerities, that the very beard could not make way through his skin. This personage, when in the full odour of filth and rags, returned one day to his convent, humbled and mortified by the sense of his own inferiority, exclaiming, "I am not yet a monk, but I have seen monks"—for he had fallen in with two of these wretches *stark naked*!—*Peregrinatorium Religiosum*, by T. Dudley Fosbrooke, A. M., F.A.S., London, 1819.

this considerate creature doubled on one occasion when Anthony visited him;* that Hilary subsisted upon fifteen figs a-day for a number of years; that Saint Genovefa, of Paris, lived thirty-

* The cause of Anthony's visit was this:—He, fancying himself to be the most retired of all monks, was humbled by being told in a dream that there was a better than himself, who resided farther in the wilderness. Accordingly Anthony sets out in search of Paul's habitation, which was nigh to some ruins that had been (as the legend states) the mint of Egypt, in the days of Anthony and Cleopatra; and meeting no other persons on the way than a Satyr and a Centaur, arrived at the cave, and saw an hyena go in. Paul hearing a human footstep closed the portal; but Anthony entreated that the holy man, who had allowed a beast to enter, would not exclude a brother. Overcome by six hours' perseverance on the part of his visitor, the hermit removed the stone, and asked Anthony wherefore he had taken that trouble to see a poor decayed old man, who would speedily return to dust? The next question was a natural one—how the affairs of the world were going on? *Narra mihi quæso, quomodo se habeat hominum genus? An in antiquis urbibus nova tecta consurgant? quo mundus regatur imperio? an supersint aliqui qui dæmonum errore rapiantur?* However, Anthony is sent back to fetch a cloak, which Athanasius had given him, and in which his new friend desires to be buried. On his return to the cave, he is apprised of Paul's decease by seeing his soul ascend to glory: he finds the dead hermit on his knees, his body erect, his hands, head, and eyes upraised in the attitude of prayer, and two lions attending as grave-diggers.

five years upon a small quantity of barley bread daily; that Saint Catherine, of Cardonna, in Spain, a nun of the Carmelite order, subsisted solely upon *grass*; and it is recorded that some devotees in our own country have existed upon the Popish wafer—an evident proof of the existence of something more substantial than the mere *accidents* of bread remaining after the “*Hoc est corpus meum*” of the priest; yea, the very substance and reality.* Vegetables, cheese, fruit, or fish, were seldom eaten by the oriental monks; but, on particular occasions, their abbots re-

Anthony buried him in the cave; from whence his corpse was translated, first to Constantinople, secondly to Venice, and finally to Buda, where La Brocquiere saw it in a state of *perfect preservation* four hundred years ago!—*Ibid.*

* Luther relates that when at Rome he found priests, in the consecration of the wafer, while telling the people that they were creating God, using the words, “*Tu es panis et panis manebis.*” “Thou art bread, and bread thou shalt remain!”—*Note to a Lecture on Popery, Priestcraft, &c. by the Rev. James Gibson, of College Church, Glasgow.*

In the preface to Archbishop Wake's Discourse of the Holy Eucharist, it is related that Archbishop Usher, who had converted by his agency some Romish priests, once inquired of them, What they, who said mass every day, and were not obliged to confess venial sins, could

trenched and mitigated the austerity of the rules, by allowing them the use of the small fish of the Nile: a luxury which was had at the banquet to which Cassian was invited by Serenus, an Egyptian abbot.

Among the western monks, the rules of Columbanus were the most severe, being nearly as rigorous as those of their brethren in the east. In Seville, the monastic constitutions of Isidore were very lenient, and permitted the use of flesh-meat occasionally. So great, however, did the relaxation in monastic discipline become, that the famous founder of the Benedictines was finally compelled to allow a Roman measure of wine, called *hemina*, (equal to half-a-pint) daily to his monks; and those of his disciples who crossed the Alps, the Rhine, and the Baltic, required a still stronger beverage, and in a more liberal quantity.* It is

have to trouble confessors with? They ingeniously acknowledged that the chief part of their constant confession was, *their own infidelity* as to the point of Transubstantiation: for which they mutually quitted and absolved one another!—*Quoted by Fletcher, from Dr. Harris's Sermon, in his Lectures on the Principles and Institutions of the Roman Catholic Religion.*

* "Every one," saith St. Benedict, "hath his proper gift from God, one thus, and another thus, and therefore we appoint the measure of other men's food not without

true that Pachomius ultimately increased the quantity of food; but, as a "*quid pro quo*," he made his followers work in proportion.

Universally the monks carried their vows of evangelical poverty (as such is improperly termed) and obedience to a great extent. The former appeared very prominently in their exterior—their habit or tunic, which they wore as an outside covering, consisting but of the coarsest and cheapest materials; and except in the east, where the article was far from expensive, never indulging in the luxury of linen: even not unfrequently did the skins of beasts constitute their sole dress. By their obedience they rendered themselves ridiculous, yielding readily, and blindly, to the most capricious desires of their superiors, however difficult or preposterous such may appear.

some scrupulosity. Yet, considering the imbecility of the infirm, we think a *hemina* of wine daily will suffice for each. And if either labour, heat of the summer, or situation of the place, require more, let the prior do what he thinketh good, having ever a care that *superfluity* or *drunkenness* creep not in. And although we read wine to be in no sort the drink of monks, yet, *because in these times they will not be so persuaded*, let us at least consent to this; that we drink not to satiety, but sparingly."—*Trans. of the Rules of St. Benedict*, by C. F., priest of the Order. edit. Douay, 1638.

Saint Gregory relates the following circumstance, as having occurred in his own monastery : "A monk of the name of Justus had amassed a large sum of money, amounting to *three crowns*, for his own use: his sin was discovered; however, by the singular industry of Gregory, he was brought to repent on his death-bed. As an example to others, the saint ordered the poor monk's body and his money to be buried in a dunghill, and forbade prayers to be read for his soul. At length Gregory repented of his harsh treatment of his poor deceased brother, and calling Pretorius, the prior of the convent, desired him to say masses for Justus for thirty days in succession. At the termination of this period, the dead man appeared to brother Copiosus, and told him, that he had indeed been in a very bad state, but he was then quite well, as he had that day received the communion!"

Nor were these wretched beings exempt from more rigid discipline and additional penances. The most trivial fault or imperfection was punished with extreme rigour and barbarous cruelty; rendering the offender subject to long fasting, and watching, solitary confinement, and cruel flagellations. Even in the west, the rules of Columbanus, which are said to have surpassed

all others in simplicity and brevity, inflicted no less than one hundred lashes for faults of a character so trivial, that they could not be mentioned without exciting the risibility of our readers! * But there were cruelties infinitely worse than these practised by abbots; such as mutilating their monks, and even putting out their eyes: † and we have an instance recorded of an abbess in England, cutting off the nose of each nun in her convent with a razor! ‡ But barbarous as these acts may appear, the inhuman

* Jac. Usserii *Sylloge Antiquar. Epistolar. Hibernicar*, p. 5—15. Holstenii *Codex Regularum*, tom. ii. p. 48.

† Ammonius, who went to Rome with Athanasius, when about to enter upon the episcopal office, cut off his own right ear, that by mutilation of his person he might disqualify himself for ordination. Evagrius, whom Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, wished to force the prelacy upon, having effected his escape without maiming himself in any way, afterwards happened to meet Ammonius, and told him jocosely, that he had done wrong in cutting off his own ear, as he had by that means rendered himself criminal in the sight of God: to whom Ammonius replied, "But do you think, Evagrius, that you will not be punished, who, from self-love, have cut out your own tongue, to avoid the exercise of that gift of utterance which has been committed to you?"—*Socrates's Eccles. Hist*, lib. iv. c. 24, pp. 336, 337.

‡ Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*.

vade in pace, or subterraneous dungeon, more recently invented, far exceeded them.

Manual labour was at first obligatory upon all who embraced a monastic profession, and was considered both in the light of a penance, and as necessary to their support : the garden and fields, therefore, they cultivated with diligent care. In Egypt, the monks principally occupied themselves by making sandals of wood, and baskets and mats of the palm-tree leaves ; the intrinsic value of which becoming enhanced by the sanctimonious character of the workmen, they were sold at a pretty profitable rate in Alexandria, to which city boats descended from the several monasteries of Tabenne and Thebais. Yet, antichristian and absurd as we believe the system of monachism is, it would be unjust not to acknowledge that the profane sciences were cultivated and preserved, during the dark ages, by a few learned solitaries, who chanced to enter these asylums ; * and to whose indefatigable pens each lover of science and literature must confess that he owes a large debt of gratitude.

At length, however, manual labour became

* *Vide* Mabillon, *Acta, S.S. Ord. Benedicti*, tom. ii. p. 513.

nearly or altogether dispensed with, the riches of the monasteries supplying all their necessary wants. *Here* the infatuated novice was obliged to deliver up all his earthly possessions into the hands of the abbot, ere he could be considered as having perfectly, and in spirit, renounced the world he had left; others contributed plate, money, and valuable articles to a large amount, with the view of obtaining the prayers, or a participation in the penances of those, who were in their estimation, eminently sanctified servants of God. "All such," says Dr. Mosheim, "as respected the common rules of decency, or preserved in their external demeanor the least appearance of piety and virtue, were looked upon as saints of the highest rank, and considered as the peculiar favourites of heaven. This circumstance was, no doubt, favourable to many of the monks, who were less profligate than the rest of their order, and might contribute more or less to support the whole body. Besides, it often happened that princes, dukes, knights, and generals, whose days had been consumed in debauchery and crimes, and distinguished by nothing but the violent exploits of unbridled lust, cruelty, and avarice, felt, at the approach of old age, or death, the inexpressible anguish of a wounded con-

science, and the gloomy apprehensions and terrors it excites. In this dreadful condition what was their resource? What were the means by which they hoped to disarm the uplifted hand of divine justice, and render the governor of the world propitious? They purchased, at an enormous price, the prayers of the monks, to screen them from judgment, and devoted to God and to the saints a large portion of the fruits of their rapine, or entered themselves into the monastic order, and bequeathed their possessions to their new brethren. And thus it was that monkery received perpetually new accessions of opulence and credit." *

From these and numerous other causes, wealth increased in all monasteries celebrated for notoriety, especially in those of the east, and among the famous order of Benedictines.† And with

* Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. ii. pp. 527—528. Cent. xi.

† The life of St. Benedict, founder of this order, has been written by no less a personage than Pope Gregory the Great, from the information, as he affirms, of four disciples of the saint. It is one of the worst that ever was written; for though the lives of the saints in general are as richly larded with lies, there is not, perhaps, a single one, with any foundation in truth from which so little information can be obtained. He was born in the province of Nursia, about the year 480, and was sent to

its increase degeneracy grew in proportion.* Hence, we find that they who forsook the world with apparent contempt became afterwards its

Rome to study the liberal sciences; but fearing lest he should lose his soul in the vain pursuit of knowledge, "*recessit scienter nesciens, et sapienter indoctus*," says St. Gregory, he left his family, as well as his studies, became a monk, and was chosen abbot; but being too strict for those who were under him, they attempted to poison him. After escaping the danger he retired for a while into solitude, till, "increasing wonderfully in virtue and miracles," the noble Romans began to bring their children to him for instruction, and he acquired sufficient influence to establish twelve monasteries with twelve monks in each. Here also he provoked either envy by his reputation, or hatred by his austerity; a priest in the neighbourhood is accused of endeavouring first to poison him, and afterwards to pervert his disciples, and Benedict thought it prudent once more to withdraw. He took with him a few of his monks, and was accompanied by two angels, and three tame cows, a circumstance unaccountably omitted by his papal biographer, but related upon the equally valid testimony of Pietro Damiano, a cardinal and a saint. With this remarkable retinue he arrived at Mount Cassino, formerly, it is said, the residence of the Roman author Varro. There he destroyed a temple of Apollo, converted the pagans in the neighbourhood, founded a convent, wrote the rule of his order, and died in the year 543. *Quar. Rev.* 1819.

* Simon, *Biblioth. Critique*, tom. iii. cap. xxxii. p. 331.

most attached and fondest votaries—they were, in reality, “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.” We can form some idea of the extent of this degeneracy from the facts, that Pope Pius VII. had to issue a bull, restricting monks from appearing in play-houses with the *habits* of their order! and that Charlemagne had attempted, by repeated and severe edicts, to put a stop to the growing evils which resulted from their licentiousness and enormities.*

* *Capitularia Caroli.* published by Baluzius, tom. i. p. 148, &c.

CHAPTER III.

THE "CONSUETUDINAL" OF ANCHORITES AND CŒNOBITES.

"No points of faith, no axioms of morality, were more firmly established than the belief that every indulgence was sinful ; that whatever gratified the senses, however apparently innocent, must be injurious to the soul ; that the ties of natural affection weaned the heart from God ; that the duties of social life must be abandoned by those who regarded their own salvation ; and that in proportion as man inflicted privations and torments upon himself, he pleased his Creator !"

MONKS were originally distinguished by the names of Cœnobites and Anchorites ; the former so called from the circumstance of their living under regular rules and discipline ; the latter from their extraordinary fanaticism in regulating their own observances, and living in seclusion, and apart from the majority of their brethren. These early separatists deprecated and contemned the spirit of the monastery as much as they did that of the world ; and lest they should be contaminated thereby, and induced to become as remiss and unmortified as others, fled from the baneful

atmosphere into the inaccessible cave and uninhabited desert, frequented only by animals of prey, whom they even affected to imitate by going upon their hands and knees! Some aspirants took up their dwellings in the tombs, like the demoniacs, or abode in dens with wild beasts, or else made dens for themselves, and burrowed into the ground. Here, indeed, they had ample opportunity for gratifying their savage propensities, and, accordingly, they embraced such a mode of life with delight and satisfaction. But, as might be expected, they finally sunk under the stupendous weight of suffering, occasioned, in part, by heavy chains, collars, bracelets, gauntlets, and greaves, of massive and rigid iron; even some of those saints (forgive us for abusing the name), disdained the dress necessary for covering, and wandered about naked, exposed to the sun, the wind, and the sand showers which swept through the desert. A remarkable instance of this kind of fanaticism we have exemplified in the case of St. Mary of Egypt—a person far-famed in monastic lore. Others, again, assimilating themselves more closely to the very brute, actually grazed in the fields of Mesopotamia; from which circumstance they were denominated *Βοσκοί*. And here it will not be ill-

timed to mention a few particulars respecting St. Simeon Stylites, the famous pillar saint.

This extraordinary fanatic, a sad and affecting instance of the physical miseries resulting from Rome's iniquitous doctrine of merit, was a Syrian by birth, and had been engaged in the occupation of a shepherd prior to his entering a monastic inclosure.* Not considering, however, the profession of a monk sufficiently austere, he formed a scheme, as novel as it was ridiculous, by which he imagined he could appease the justice of God, and render ample satisfaction for his sins! Accordingly he quitted his abode, and betook himself to a dreary spot in the desert, where, with a view of escaping the contagion of the world, and being lifted up above its cares, toils, and pursuits, he passed thirty-seven years of his miserable life upon five pillars, of six, twelve, twenty-two, thirty-six, and forty cubits high,† upon which latter eminence he was bound by irons, so that he was constrained to remain in an immovable position; and upon which, after performing rigorous mortifications deserving of the name (which, by-

* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. ii. p. 49,

† *Vide Acts of Simeon the Stylite*, in Steph. Euodii Assemani *Actis Martyrum Orient. et Occident*, vol. ii p. 227. (Romæ 1748.)

the-bye, has helped in no small degree to fill the "*merit box*" of the Vatican), he finally expired.

So great was the reputation of this fanatic, and so highly was he venerated, that when the Emperor Theodosius had given a command to reinstate the Jews of Antioch in their synagogue, and Simeon rebuked him for his conduct, Theodosius confessed the iniquity of which he was guilty ; and, not deeming this act sufficient to expiate his sin, actually deposed the civil officer who advised him in the affair, ousted the poor, persecuted descendants of Abraham, and finally besought, with earnestness and humiliation, the prayers and intercession of the aerial saint !

After the decease of Simeon a church was built round the pillar, to perpetuate the remembrance of so devoted a man. And it is related on the authority of Evagrius, who had been a spectator of the miracle, that on each anniversary of the saint, a star was observed playing about the lofty monument. Women were not permitted to enter the church on those auspicious occasions, they might only stand at the door, and peep in, to witness the supernatural manifestation of delight with which heaven viewed a heap of stones upon which the feet of so austere and sanctified a man once rested. His body was finally translated to Antioch, and

from thence would have been removed, by the Emperor Leo, to Constantinople, had it not been for the entreaty of the people of the former city, who represented that an earthquake had thrown down their fortifications, and that they had brought thither the body of Simeon, that it should supply for them the want of a wall. The actions of this madman, or saint, according to the phraseology of the Church of Rome, are recorded for edification, though not for *imitation*, by Romish hagiographers. "This godly man," writes the same Evagrius, "while yet in the flesh, imitated the life of angels, withdrew himself from earthly things, forced nature, which ever inclineth downwards, aspiring to things heavenly, and placing himself between earth and heaven, he, together with the angels, praised the Lord, lifted up the prayers of men, and offered them to God, and brought down the mercy of God to make men partakers thereof."* Such, dear reader, are the sort of men held forth to the Roman Catholic world, as flowers of the

* There is mention made of a second Simeon the Stylite, who lived about the sixth century, and who, it is said, exceeded in mortification of life, the originator of the aerial sect. He lived upon his pillar sixty-eight years, and pretended to work miracles, and to prophesy. *Vide F. Spanheim's Eccl. Hist.* p. 1154. *Evagrius Hist.* lib. vi. c. xxiii.

spiritual garden; whereas, in truth, they are rank weeds of the Egyptian soil.

This senseless superstition of the Syrians and Orientals the Latins had too much judgment and common sense to imitate, nor was such a course countenanced by the bishops of the Latin church; for when Wulfilaicus erected one of those pillars in Treves, with the view of imitating the renowned Simeon by living upon it, the neighbouring bishops would not allow him to put his desire into effect, and accordingly had the pillar crumbled to the ground.*

The monastic legends present to us numerous other instances of the silliest extravagancies of superstition, and the most pitiable and loathsome excesses of ascetic rigour. Such as, for instance, the story of St. Mary of Egypt, who roamed uncovered through the barren wilderness; St. Pier, who always walked while he was taking his food, "because," to use his own phraseology, "he did not consider eating as a business for which time was to be set apart, but as a thing to be done when it did not interrupt his avocation;" Beradat, who used no clothing, except a close sack of skins,

* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. ii. p. 50. Gregor. Turonens. Hist. Francor. lib. viii. cap. xv. p. 387.

which had no other opening than one small one for his nose, and another for his mouth; St. Theresa, who, to torment her body, naturally weak and delicate, made use of hair-shirts, nettles, and scourges, and even used to roll herself among thorns; St. Eufraxia, who belonged to a convent containing one hundred and thirty nuns, not one of whom ever washed her feet; the very mention of such an indulgence as a bath being an abomination to them—" *De balneo verò superfluum est loqui: audientes enim vehementer vituperabant, confusiones et opprobrii plenam censescentes, vel solam illius mentionem, et tamquam rei abominabilis nec auditum quidem volebant tolerare;*" Eustachius, abbot of Hay, in Normanby, a celebrated impostor, who pretended to work many miracles, and to have received a letter from heaven, written by the hand of the Almighty himself, in which he threatened to rain sticks, stones, and boiling water, on such as frequented fairs and markets on the sabbath day; Thomas à Becket, the arrogant and disaffected archbishop of Canterbury, a rebel to his king and a traitor to his country,* but canonized as a saint by the Church of Rome, after whose death the historian writes:—"About

* Henry's Hist. Engl. vol. v. p. 344.

Easter, it pleased the Lord Jesus Christ to irradiate his glorious martyr, Thomas à Becket, with many miracles, that it might appear to all the world he had obtained a victory suitable to his merits. None who approached his sepulchre in faith returned without a cure ; for strength was restored to the lame, hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, health to lepers, and life to the dead. Nay, not only men and women, *but even birds and beasts*, were raised from death to life." * It was even asserted that, being exposed to view in the church before he was buried, he rose out of his coffin, and lighted the wax candles which had been extinguished ; and that after the "*requiem*" for the repose of his departed spirit had been recited, he held up his hand to bless the assembly. And although fifty years after the death of Becket it was the subject of a public dispute at the university of Paris, whether he was in heaven or in hell—so ambiguous a point was his sanctity—some asserting, that for his extreme pride he deserved to be damned ; yet we find that in the year 1420, not fewer than fifty thousand foreigners, of all ages and sexes, made a pilgrimage to this renowned

* Mat. Par. p. 87.

shrine, which was enriched with a prodigious quantity of precious stones. One of inestimable value, supposed to be the most splendid in Europe, was offered at this shrine by Lewis VII. of France, when he made a pilgrimage thereto." *

The following account of the austerities of St. Rose, of Lima, who was canonized by Pope Clement X. A.D. 1673, may be deemed interesting. It is extracted from the bull of her canonization :

"She changed the stones and crosses (with which, when going to prayer in her childhood, and as yet ignorant of the use of whips, she was loaded by her maid Marianne, who was almost the only person conscious of her mortifications) into iron chains, which she prepared as scourges, with which, after the example of St. Dominic, every night she offered herself a bloody victim to God to avert his just anger, even to the copious effusion of streams of blood, either for the sorrows of the holy church, or for the necessities of the endangered kingdom of the city of Lima, or for *compensating the wrongs of sinners, or for making an expiation for the souls of the dead, or for obtaining divine aid for those who were in their*

* *Vide* Rapin's Hist. of Engl. vol. i. p. 232, 233 (fol. ed.) Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation book iii.

last agonies ; the servant being sometimes horror-struck at such dreadful blows of the chains. And when the use of these were forbidden to her, she privately encircled her waist with one of them, bound thrice round her, so that it never was apparent that she wore it, except when she was under the tortures of the sciatica, which chain was afterwards loosened only by a miracle ; and its links, after the virgin's death, were found to emit a wondrous and indescribable sweet odour. Lest any part of her innocent body should be free from suffering, she tortured her arms and limbs with penal chains, and stuffed her breast and sides with handfuls of nettles and small briars. She afterwards increased the sharpness of the hair-cloth, which reached from her neck beneath her knees, by needles mixed up with it, which she used for many years, until she was ordered to put it off on account of the frequent vomiting of blood. When she laid aside this punishment, she substituted another garment less injurious to her health, but not less troublesome ; for beneath it every movement was painful to her. Her feet only were free from these sufferings, which either by hitting them with stones, or by the burning of an oven, she did not suffer to be free from torture. * * * * *

“She fixed upon her head a tin crown, with sharp little nails in it, and for some years never put it on without receiving wounds. When she grew older, this was replaced by one which was armed by ninety-nine points. * * * *

“She desired the hardness of her bed to be such that it should rather drive away than invite sleep, so that when about to sleep, the same should be both a bed to her and an instrument of torture. Her pillow was either an unpolished trunk, or stones concealed for this purpose, which bed she afterwards so filled with sharp pieces of tiles and triangular pieces of broken jugs, that the sharp points of each should be turned to her body; nor did she try to sleep until she had embittered her mouth with a draught of gall.*

“Near the time of her death, Rosa throughout lent alternately sang the canticles and praises of God, every day for a whole hour, with a very melodious bird, in so orderly a manner, that when the bird sang, the virgin was silent, and when the virgin sang, the bird, who was most attentive, ceased to sing—*‘Rosa cantica et laudes Dei*

* Many of these austerities are narrated in the Roman Breviary for 30th August.

quotide per horam integram tanto ordine, ut canente avicula virgo sileret, et virgine modulante, avicula attentissima nec pipiret.' She invited, moreover, the inanimate plants after an unheard-of fashion to praise and to pray to God, pronouncing the verse, '*Benedicite universa germinantia in terra Domino !*' 'Bless the Lord, all ye things which bud on the earth.' And she so visibly persuaded them, *that the tops of the trees touched the earth*, as if adoring their Creator with a solemn veneration!" *

The following specimen of worse than Hindoo fanaticism will exhibit the fact, that the Romish standard of sanctity in the nineteenth century is just the same as it had been during the dark ages of ignorance and superstition, when the greatest knaves and madmen were canonized as saints, and obtained a place in the mass-book. It is the sworn testimony of Father Dominic Corsano, missionary of the congregation of the most holy Redeemer, and confessor to the venerable servant of God,

* *Codex Constitutionum, quas summi pontifices ediderunt in solemni canonizatione Sanctorum a Johanne xv. ad Benedictum xiii., sive ab an. Dom. 993, usque ad A.D. 1729. Accurante Justo Fontanino, Archiepiscopo Ancyrano. Romæ, 1729. Ex. typographia Reverendæ Cameræ Apostolicæ.*

Alphonso Maria de Liguria, bishop of St. Agatha, declared at his canonization, A.D. 1830.

"I know for a certainty that this servant of God constantly scourged himself unbloodily and bloodily, and besides the unbloody scourgings enjoined by his rule, he was wont to punish himself every day, in the morning before the usual hour of rising, and in the evening after the signal for repose. On Saturdays he scourged himself till the blood flowed, and these scourgings were so violent, and caused so much blood to gush from his limbs, that not only was his linen always covered with it, but you might even see the walls of his small room stained, and even books which he kept in it were sprinkled with it. * * * *

Also from what I have seen with my own eyes, and have heard declared by certain fathers who are worthy of credit, I know that this servant of God macerated his body with hair-cloth with sharp points in it, and with chains, as well on the arms as on the legs, which he carried with him till dinner-time, and these for the most part were so armed with sharp points, that they filled with horror all who ever saw them. I have heard say, also, that he had a dress filled with a coat of mail with iron points; that he had bandages of camel's hair: and other instruments of penance

were casually seen by me, and by others of my companions, notwithstanding his zealous and circumspect secrecy.

"Of a similar kind was his extreme mortification in sleeping upon two planks covered with a sack, with a little straw in it, so that it appeared a hard stone. I frequently also heard say, that he slept during his few hours with a large stone hung on, and tied to his feet. * * * *

"I well remember that he never shaved himself, when he was with us, with a razor, but only by little and little he did it with pincers, and he caused his assistant friar to make his clerical crown with the same pincers—" *Mi ricordo bene, che egli non si fece mai la barba, vivendo fra noi, col rasajo, ma solamente ogni tanto se la faceva stesso colle forbice, e facendose fare dal fratello assistente la corona chiericole colla stessa forbice.*" *

The Roman Breviary is the repertory of legends as fabulous and absurd as those we have already

* *Sacra rituum congregatione, emo. et Rmo. Domino Cardinali Carracciolo relatore, beatificationis et canonizationis, ven. Servi Dei Alphonsi Maria de Ligorio, fundatoris congregationis scmi. Redemptoris, ac olim Episcopi S. Agatha. Romæ, 18.6. Apud Lazarinum, Rev. Cam. Apos. typographum.*

made mention of. It informs us that St. Raymond de Pennafort made a voyage by sea of one hundred and sixty miles, from one of the Balearic isles to Barcelona, neither in a ship, nor in a boat, but upon his own cloak;* that St. Philip, of Nerium, was so wounded with the love of God, he continually languished; and his heart boiled over with such ardour, that when it could not be contained within its own boundaries, the Lord wonderfully enlarged his breast, by breaking and elevating two of his ribs;† that St. Dionysius walked, with his head in his hands, from Paris to the site of the present abbey of St. Denis;‡ that St. Nicholas, a holy infant, used regularly abstain from suck on Wednesdays and Fridays;§ that St. Benedict, founder of an order of monks, used to work miracles habitually, raise the dead to life, and sing psalms before he was born;|| and that St. Patrick was wont to repeat daily the whole psalter, together with the canticles, and two hundred hymns and prayers; three hundred

* Breviarum Romanum, Die xxiii. Januarii.

† *Ibid.* Die xxvi. Maii.

‡ *Ibid.* Die ix. Octobris.

§ *Ibid.* Die vi. Decembris.

|| *Ibid.* Die xxi. Martii. This strange incident is thus gravely narrated by the Cistercian poet, F. Nicholas Bravo,

times on each day to worship God upon his knees, and in each canonical hour of the day to sign himself one hundred times with the sign of the cross. Dividing the night into three portions, he spent the first in running through one hundred psalms, and in two hundred genuflexions; the second, in running through the other fifty psalms, immersed in cold water, and with his heart, eyes, and hands, raised to heaven, he yielded the third part to a short sleep upon a hard stone.*

Miss Nano Nagle is a striking specimen, in modern times, of the dreadful and degrading system of monachism—an engine of destruction wielded with powerful effect in advancing the cause of apostate Rome. She was well known as

in his *Benedictina*, on the authority of Bonifacius Simoneta, an abbot of his order:—

—“ Encarcelado en el lugar materno,
Alegres muestras el infante dava,
Articulando con un son superno
La voz que claro afuera resonava ;
Ya en esto el niño delicada y tierno
El gozo celestial pronosticava,
Pues, aunque en cárcel tenebrosa y negra
Con celestiales canticos se alegra.
Que pudo ser la vida de este infante,
Sino contento, jubilo, alborozo,
Pues sin mira del sol la luz radiante,
Antes que sepa el llanto, muestra el gozo !
Ya da indicios alegres de triumphante
Del infernal y Tartaro destrozo,
Semejante al Baptista en gloria tanta,
Pues donde danza Juan, Benito canta.”

• * S. Patritius *Breviarum Romanum*. Die xvii. Martii. Antverpæ, 1823.

the founder of one of the Presentation Convents at Cork. So much was she under the influence of Popish fanaticism, that she was almost continually in a kneeling posture, to enhance the merit of her devotions. Her knees became, in consequence, ulcerated; but she did not cease to assume this attitude, nor would she apply a remedy, although it is more than probable that this continued act of austerity and self-denial, tended to hasten her dissolution.

“O judgment, thou hast fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason!”

Truly has the ecclesiastical historian, when speaking of these so-called *saints* and their biographers, observed:—

“No models of rational piety are to be found among those pretended worthies, whom they propose to Christians as objects of imitation. They amuse their readers with gigantic fables and trifling romances. The example they exhibit are those of certain delirious *fanatics*, whom they call *saints*—men of a corrupt and perverted judgment, who offered violence to reason and nature by the horrors of an extravagant austerity in their own conduct, and by the severity of those singular and inhuman rules which they prescribed to

others. For, by what means were these men *sainted*? By starving themselves with a frantic obstinacy, and bearing the useless hardships of hunger, thirst, and inclement seasons, with steadfastness and perseverance; by running about the country like madmen, in tattered garments, and sometimes half-naked, or shutting themselves up in a narrow space, where they continued motionless; by standing for a long time in certain postures, with their eyes closed, in the enthusiastic expectation of divine light. All this was saint-like and glorious; and the more that any ambitious fanatic departed from the dictates of reason and common sense, and counterfeited the wild gestures and the incoherent conduct of an idiot, or a lunatic, the surer was his prospect of obtaining an eminent rank among the heroes and demi-gods of a corrupt and degenerate church." *

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. pp. 130, 131.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO EMBRACED THE MONASTIC PROFESSION.

“ The monastic institutions were in the first ages merely superstitions ; but they ended in being eminently corrupt and wicked.”

WITH reference to the character of those self-righteous Pharisees, who sought, both in the desert and in the cell, to attain a purity and perfection equal to, if not surpassing, that of the celestial intelligences, by the regular performance of a certain routine of duty, and the scrupulous observance of rules and constitutions, (as unscriptural in their nature as they were degrading to social beings), we shall, in the first instance, take an extract from the writings of Rutilius, a celebrated traveller, who, when he visited the island of Capraria (originally inhabited by wild goats, and taking its name from that circumstance), expressed his surprise, on beholding its new inhabitants, in the following terms :—

“ The whole island is filled, or rather defiled,

by men who fly from the light. They call themselves monks, or solitaries, because they desire to live alone, without any witnesses of their actions. They fear the gifts of fortune from the apprehension of losing them ; and lest they should be miserable, they embrace a life of voluntary wretchedness. How absurd is their choice, how perverse their understanding, to dread the evils without being able to support the blessings of the human condition. Either this melancholy madness is the effect of disease, or else the consciousness of guilt urges those unhappy men to exercise on their own bodies the tortures which are inflicted on fugitive slaves by the hands of justice.” *

Another writer,† alluding to that division of the Franciscan order, denominated the “spirituals,” observes :—

“So mad were those monks, that they conceived there was more honour in living by beggary than in any other profession. They roved about barefooted, and clad in coarse raiment, whining in every district, and rejoicing in their poverty ; and at this period the miraculous sight was seen of a

* Claud. Rutul. Numation. Itinerar. i. 439.

† The author of the Life of the Regent Murray, patron of the Reformation in Scotland.

great schism in the church, occasioned solely by the fanaticism of those wealthy votaries of Saint Francis, the prince of beggars. * * * *

“But the truth is, if we reckon not the bodily mortifications to which those devotees might have submitted, there was literally nothing in all this profession of beggary which deserved the name; for though they undoubtedly subsisted by alms, it was not defined of what these alms should consist; and hence, although beggary was their glory, and the order of mendicancy their highest boast, they nevertheless, in superstitious times, fared not much worse than those who saw no cause for glorying in such a distinction. And the influence which they possessed by thus associating themselves with men of all ranks, and by this accommodation of themselves to every condition, enabled them to preserve the protection of the great, to gain ready access to every habitation, to interfere in every domestic circle, and to obtain devotees to their confessionals; they were, in short, a set of peripatetic ecclesiastics, and latterly, like all the other orders, they degenerated into roving priests.” *

Dalzell, after employing the epithet—“truly

* Life of George Buchanan, pp. 92, 93.

licensed vagabonds," proceeds to say of these monks—"Their only just characteristics were ignorance and assurance, levying a general contribution for their maintenance. Their business was to keep the people as ignorant as themselves,* and to inculcate a profound veneration for saints, relics, and the ministers of the church. Their manners were rude, brutal, and rapacious. They were vagrant monks."†

Mosheim, the ecclesiastical historian, speaking of monkish orders, says—"The multitude had such an high opinion of those sturdy beggars, and of their credit with the supreme being, that great numbers of both sexes, some in health, others in a state of infirmity, others at the point of death, earnestly desired to be admitted into the mendicant orders, which they looked upon as a safe and infallible method of rendering heaven propitious. Many made it an essential part of their last wills, that their carcasses after death should be wrapped in old ragged Dominican or Franciscan habits,

* It is a matter of undoubted testimony that so ignorant were many of the ecclesiastics of the 16th century that they believed the New Testament to be written by Martin Luther, and consequently regarded it as a wicked book.

† Cursory Remarks, vol. i. p. 16.

and interred among the mendicants. For such was the barbarous superstition and wretched ignorance of this age, that people universally believed they should readily obtain mercy from Christ at the day of judgment, if they appeared before his tribunal associated with the mendicant friars.”*

Nicholas de Clemangis, the pupil of the celebrated Gerson, rector of the University of Paris, and Secretary to Pope Benedict XII., a man of no ordinary powers of mind, and a profound and accomplished scholar, who, from the circumstance of his being connected with the Papal court, must have had peculiar facilities afforded him of acquiring information upon ecclesiastical matters, thus writes, in his description of the monastic orders :—

“I should have much to say of the monks and monastics, were I not long ere this weary of the enumeration of so many and such great abominations. Yet, not to suffer them to pass wholly untouched, it is necessary to say something. But what good can be said of those who, in proportion as they are bound by their vows to be perfect above all other sons of the church, abstracted

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. ii. p. 730.

from the care of worldly things, which they have renounced, and raised up to the contemplation of heavenly things alone; in proportion as they are obliged to be more temperate, less disposed to wander, and to go more seldom from the walls of their cloister into public, in the same proportion exhibit themselves, on the contrary, as more than others, strangers to all these obligations; more grasping, more avaricious, more immersed in secular affairs, more slippery, more undisciplined, dissolute, and restless, more prone to run about into public, and even (if the reins are loosened) indecent places; so as that nothing is so odious to them as the cell and the cloister, reading and prayer, their rule and their profession. Wherefore they are monks indeed in their outward habit, but in life, in practice, inwardly in the defilement of their consciences, they are very far removed from that perfection which their habit pretends. Verily they grievously deceive themselves. For the more they abandon their profession, and seek eagerly after earthly riches, so much the less do they really hold, and so much the more do their endowments and revenues run away to nothing.

* * * *

“The nuns only now remain. * * * But modesty forbids me to say much of these (though

I have much to say), lest we should draw out to too great a length a discourse which should apply not to a choir of virgins dedicated to God, but rather to

and the impure practices of unchastity. For what, I pray you, are the nunneries now but sanctuaries—not of God, but of Venus?

* * * * *

The same writer further observes—"I would not that any should suppose that I involve all our ecclesiastics, without any exception, in such charges. I know that he did not, and could not lie, who said, 'Peter, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Nor am I ignorant that there are in every station some, and perhaps many, good, just, and innocent men, who stand aloof from those crimes which have been mentioned. But so great is the overflow of the wicked in all professions, that scarce one in a thousand can be found who honestly performs what his profession requires. Nay, if there chances to be some

* Compare Ivo of Charles, Ep. 70, and the note of Juretus upon that place.

simple, chaste, and frugal man, in a college or convent, who does not pursue the broad and slippery road, he is made a jest of by the rest, and is presently called an oddity, or singular person, a madman, or a hypocrite. Whence also many who might have turned out well, if they had lived with modest and good men, drawn away in this manner by the company of evil comrades, are led into evil, through fear of incurring such nick-names in their fraternities.”*

We may indulge the hope that our Roman Catholic friends will receive with respect a testimony emanating from the pen of so talented and distinguished a member of their church.

The moderate and candid Cassander, alluding to the low state of morals amongst the religious orders of his time, remarks :—

“It is sufficiently manifest of itself how much monkery has degenerated from its first origin, and with what abuses it has become contaminated. *

* * The empty observance of ceremonies has so impaired and obscured religion amongst most monks, that you will hardly find any where a more licentious and profane mode of life than that

* Lib. De Corrupto Statu Ecclesiæ, cc. 21, 25. (edit. Lyd.)

which is practised in some monasteries. So that it is no wonder if (as the monastic life generally now is) it is exposed to the hatred and reprehension of many.”*

As a further testimony of the inconsistency of character in persons professing to be scrupulously observant of the rules of monastic life, we shall adduce the evidence of one who, for several years, both in the capacity of a novice, and of a professed nun, had been in connexion with the *Hotel Dieu Nunnery*, at Montreal:—

“I have often reflected,” observes the writer, “how grievously I had been deceived in my opinion of a nun’s condition! All the holiness of their lives, I now saw, was merely pretended. The appearance of sanctity and heavenly-mindedness which they had shown amongst us novices, I found was only a disguise to conceal such practices as would not be tolerated in any decent society in the world; and as for peace and joy like that of heaven, which I had expected to find among them, I learned too well that they did not exist *here*.”†

We shall now allude to the declaration drawn

* Inter opp. Grotii Theol, tom. iii. p. 608. l. 40.

† Sequel to the Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, pp. 16, 17. Dublin, 1836.

up and signed by six nuns of St. Catherine of Pictoria, and presented to the Grand Duke Leopold, A. D. 1775, which makes mention of the profligacy and gross impiety of the monks of St. Dominic. In it they say :—

“Instead of allowing us to remain in our simplicity, and protecting our innocence, they teach us, both by word and action, all kinds of indecencies. They utter the worst expressions, saying,

	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*

They allow every kind of indecency to go on in the parlour.”*

We have further a very appalling picture of the profligacy of the inmates of monastic establishments on the continent, drawn by the masterly hand of the famous Rev. Joseph Blanco White, once a priest of the Church of Rome, and chaplain to the king of Spain. After describing, at great length, the immoral practices of the Spanish ecclesiastics, and other priests of his acquaintance, some of whom, in consequence of their depraved habits, were prematurely cut off

* Roscoe's Life of Scipio de Ricci, vol. i. pp. 97, 98.

in a state of frantic insanity, he proceeds to remark :—

“ The picture of female convents requires a more delicate pencil. Yet I cannot find tints sufficiently dark and gloomy to pourtray the miseries which *I have witnessed* in their inmates. Crime, indeed, makes its way into those recesses, in spite of the spiked walls and prison gates which protect the inhabitants. *This I know with all the certainty which the self-accusation of the guilty can give!* It is, besides, a notorious fact, that the nunneries in Estremadura and Portugal, are frequently infected with vice of the grossest kind.”*

The Church of England, in one of her homilies, thus describes the impure and antichristian system of monasticism :—

“ But to pass over the innumerable superstitiousness that hath been in strange apparel, in silence, in dormitory, in cloister, in chapter, in choice of meats and drinks, and in such like things, let us consider what enormities and abuses have been in the *three chief principal points*, which they called the three essentials, or three chief foundations of

* Rev. Blanco White's *Practical and Internal Evidence against Catholicism*. London, 1825, pp. 132, 135,

religion, that is to say, *obedience, chastity, and wilful poverty*. First, under pretence or colour of obedience to their father in religion, which obedience they made themselves, they were made free by their rules and canons from the obedience of their natural father and mother, and from the obedience of emperor and king, and all temporary power, whom of very duty, by God's laws, they were bound to obey. And so the profession of their obedience not due, was a forsaking of their due obedience. And how their profession of chastity was kept, it is more honesty to pass over in silence, and let the world judge of what is well known, than with unchaste words, by expressing of their unchaste life, to offend chaste and godly ears. And as for their wilful poverty, it was such that, when in possessions, jewels, plate, and riches, they were equal or above merchants, gentlemen, barons, earls, and dukes; yet by this subtile, sophistical term, *proprium in communi*, that is to say, proper in common, they mocked the world; persuading that, notwithstanding all their possessions and riches, yet they kept their vow, and were in wilful poverty. But for all their riches, they might neither help father nor mother, nor other that were indeed very needy and poor, without the license of their father-

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abbot, prior, or warden ; and yet they might take of every man, but they might not give aught to any man ; no, not to them whom the laws of God bound them to help. * * * * * And the longer prayers they used by day and by night, under pretence and colour of holiness, to get the favour of widows, and other simple folks, that they might sing trentalles and service for their husbands and friends, and admit or receive them into their prayers—the more truly is verified of them the saying of Christ : ‘ Woe unto you Scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites ! For you devour widows’ houses under colour of long prayers, therefore your damnation shall be the greater.’*

The founder of the famous Benedictines, in the opening of the rule of his order,† gives us the

* Homily of Good Works, part iii.

† This rule has been compared to Aaron’s rod, because it swallowed up all the others. At the second Council of Douzy, in 876, it was declared to be an inspired work, of equal authority with the canonical scriptures, and the writings of the Catholic doctors. Leo, archbishop of Ravenna, calls it a divine rule, dictated by the Holy Ghost, and leading infallibly to heaven. The Grand Duke, Cosmo de Medici, studied it, that he might there learn how to govern his estates ; and Calmet affirms, that in this work St. Benedict has presented an ideal of

following account of the various kinds of monks, and their characters. He says :—

“ There are four kinds of monks. The first is of Cœnobites, that is monasterial or conventual, living under a rule or abbot. The second kind is of Anachorits, that is hermits, who not by a novitial fervour of devotion, but by a long probation in a monastic kind of life, have learnt, with the assistance of others, to fight against the devil; and being well armed, are able now, without the support of any other, by God’s help, to fight hand to hand against the vices of the flesh and evil cogitations, and so proceed from the fraternal army to the single combat of the wilderness. The third and foulest kind of monks are the Saraibaites, who not having been tried under any rule by the

the most excellent monarchy and the most perfect government. More than two hundred works have been written upon it, of which the best, and perhaps the last, is a Commentary, in two quarto volumes, by Calmet himself. The original rule, an autograph of Benedict, was burnt in the year 897, in the monastery of Theano, when that edifice was consumed by fire. Some far more curious relics were destroyed at the same time—the sacks in which food used to be sent to the saint from heaven. “ *Sacci, in quibus jussu Dei, cœlitus eidem Patri Benedicto escæ delatæ sunt !*” Such are the words of the *Chronicon Cassinense*.—*Brit. Monach. Quar. Rev. July, 1819.*

experience of a skilful master, as gold is tried in the furnace, but being soft as lead, and still adhering by their actions to the world, are known by their tonsures to be liars unto God ; who two or three together, or perhaps singly, without a shepherd, are shut up, not in the Lord's sheep-fold, but in their own; and the pleasure of their desires is to them a law; and whatsoever they like or choose, this they will have to be holy, and what they dislike, that not to be lawful. The fourth are they who are called Gyrovagi, who all their life wander through divers provinces, and guest-wise, stay two or three days in one monastery and then in another, and are always strolling and never settled, and giving themselves altogether to their own pleasures and to the enticements of gluttony, are in all things worse than the Sarabites, of the most miserable conversation, *of all which it is better to be silent than to speak !*"* So far from the pen of St. Benedict.

The abbot Saint Bernard thus describes the worldly-mindedness and immorality of the monks :

“ What shall I say concerning their very dress,

* Trans. of the Rule of St. Benedict, by C. G., priest and monk of the order of St. Benedict. Douay, 1638. Dedicated to the Hon. Mistress Anne Carie, daughter to Lord Faulkland.

in which not warmth but colour is sought after, and neatness of apparel, rather than virtue, is considered? *I am ashamed to declare it!* But even women are surpassed in their love of dress, since richness of apparel, and not what is necessary, is studied by the monks; nor is even the *form* of religion retained! The soldiers of Christ desire rather to be gaily dressed than to be armed." *

St. Bridget, in her "Revelations," which were recognised by the Councils of Constance and Basil, and by Popes Urban VI., Martin V., and Paul V., after making such remarks on the deportment of the monks, as that a sense of delicacy obliges us to conceal them under the veil of the original,† proceeds to say:—

* S. Bernardi Abbatis in Vigilia Nativitatis Domini. Sermo i. *De Monachis*.

† Orta est abusio gravis, in hoc, quod laicis bona ecclesiæ donantur, qui uxores non ducunt propter nomen canoniale, sed impudenter habent concubinas in domibus suis perdies, et in lectis per noctes, dicentes audacter, nos non licet esse in connubio, quia canonici sumus. Presbyteri etiam diaconi et subdiaconi, olim in infamiam immundæ vitæ maximè abhorrebant. Nunc autem quidam illorum manifestè lætantur in eo, quod meretrices eorum intumesciente ventre veniunt inter alias ambulare. Nec etiam pudet eos si ab amicis eorum dicitur eis, ecce, domine, citò natus erit vobis filius vel filia!—*Revelationem S. Birgittæ*, lib. iv. c. 33. (*Edit. Colonia, 1629.*)

“ It is a sad thing to behold their rules changed into detestable abuses,” And again, alluding to the nuns, she adds :—

“ The doors through which the sisters are pleased to afford an entrance to clergymen and laymen, are open even^d at night; and therefore such places resemble * * * * * than holy cloisters !” *

Though the writers, whose testimony we have adduced, may be considered of sufficient authority in affording the world a real and unexaggerated character of the monastic orders ; yet, they were not the only individuals who, regardless of the painful consequences which such a course might possibly involve, openly and fearlessly exposed the abominations of this foul and degrading system, and cried aloud against the enormities perpetrated by those *soi-disant* saints, whose sanctity was only another name for licentiousness. We find that Robert Gosthead, Bishop of Lincoln, inveighed bitterly against the corruption, lewdness, and wickedness of the so-called religious orders of his age.† In like manner did Matthew Paris,

* Portæ indifferenter clericis et laicis quibus placet sororibus introitum dare, etiam in ipsis noctibus sunt apertæ. Et ideò talia loca similia lupanaribus, quàm sanctis claustris.—*Rev. S. Bir.* lib. iv. c. 33.

† Dupin xiii, Siecle. c. vii.

Monk of St. Albans, paint, in the most lively colours, the antichristian character of the lay and ecclesiastical orders of the church.* Arnold of Brescia, gave a similar testimony, for which he was burned at Rome, A.D. 1155, and his ashes thrown into the Tyber.† William of St. Amour, Doctor of the Sorbonne, also raised his voice against them, and in a treatise “Of the Perils of the Last Times,” applied 2 Tim. iii. 1., &c., to the mendicant orders then in existence; which work Pope Alexander IV. condemned, as containing perverse sentiments.‡ In like manner did Peter de Bruis, and Henry his disciple, rail against the hypocrisy of the monks, and asserted, amongst other things, that “monks ought to marry;” for which the one was burned, and the other imprisoned for life.§ To these might be added a host of other writers, of whom one of the most distinguished was the celebrated John Wickliffe, Rector of Lutterworth, in England, whose body, after his decease, to satisfy the intolerant spirit of the Romish Church, was dug

* Mat. Par., A.D. 1253, pp. 874.

† Spanh. Hist. Chris., c. vii. sect. iv. Dupin xii. Siecle. c. vi.

‡ Dupin. viii. Siecle. c. vii., Spanh. *ibid.* c. ix. s. i.

§ Spanh. *ibid.* c. vii. sec. ii. Dupin, xii. Siecle. c. vi.

up and burned by command of Pope Martin V., in conjunction with the decree of the Council of Constance, which iniquitous edict was executed by Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln!* This is not a solitary instance of Rome wreaking her impotent vengeance, in this barbarous manner, upon those who dared to defy her usurped and illegitimate authority. She is true in her statement that she is "unchanged and unchangeable" as far as a malignant and gospel-hating spirit goes. For she likewise exhibited the same undying hatred to righteousness and truth, on the accession of Queen Mary to the throne of England, when, by her authority, Cardinal Pole, and other eminent divines of her communion, went to Cambridge, interdicted the churches where the bodies of Bucer and Phagius were laid, and, after a mock trial, and blasphemous sentence, the dead carcasses of these eminent servants of God, were dug up, conveyed in their coffins to the market place, set upright, and bound with iron chains, and finally consumed!

From this disgusting portrait of the degeneracy and ungodly deportment of those who made a solemn profession, and wore the garb of sanctity, it will naturally occur to every unprejudiced mind,

* Spanh. *ibid.* c. vi. Dupin.

that there must have been some principle fundamentally and essentially wrong in a church, which could give birth to such a system of hypocrisy and immorality. History furnishes us with many, very many, painful records of crimes, the most horrifying and revolting, committed not only within the silent recesses of a monastic inclosure, but perpetrated visibly, openly, and without any desire even of concealment, by all degrees of ecclesiastics, from the humblest monk to the loftiest dignitary, not excepting even the sovereign pontiffs, who filled the chair of Peter :* and if history be not an "old almanac," we must certainly respect and credit its authority. It exhibits a melancholy picture of the unrighteous living of those, whose duty it was to inculcate the precepts of the gospel of Christ ; of the darkness, superstition, ignorance, moral depravity, and gross idolatry of the almost universal church ; and of the nearly total extinction of genuine piety and true religion, save what was cherished by the poor but persecuted Waldenses and Albigenses, the inhabitants of the mountains of Piedmont and of France, who strove fearlessly to uphold "the

* *Baronii Annales* (Antverpio 1603). *Genebrardi Chron.* A.C. 904. (Paris, 1585).

faith once delivered to the saints.”* And if the picture be faithfully drawn, must we not acknowledge—does not love for the truth, love for our blessed Lord, and his sacred, saving word, force upon us the conviction—that a Reformation, both in morals and religion, was most urgently and imperatively required?

So corrupted, indeed, by formal worship and superstitious observances, was the professing church, and so wonderful were the workings of the “mystery of iniquity,” prior to the bursting forth of the glorious sun of the Reformation, that we cannot contemplate the long night of thick darkness and ignorance, the intellectual bondage and spiritual desolation, the moral depravity and unblushing wickedness, which then existed in all their hideous and primeval deformity, without feeling as did the poet, who, when entering on his survey of the regions of despair, over whose portals were written, “*Lasciate ogni speranza o voi che intrate,*” exclaimed:—

“ Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
Che la diritta via era smarita :
E quanto a dir, qual’ era, e così dura,

* Reiner. Cont. Hæret. c. iv. p. 54. Thuani. Hist. lib. vi. sect. 16, vol. i. p. 220.

Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte
Tanto e amara che poco e piu morte."

DANTE INFERNO.

"When life had laboured up her midmost stage,
And, weary with her mortal pilgrimage,
Stood in suspense upon the point of Prime,
Far in a pathless grove I chanced to stray,
Where scarce imagination dares display
The gloomy scenery of the savage clime.
On the deep horrors of the tangled dell,
With dumb dismay, the pow'rs of mem'ry dwell—
Scenes terrible as dark impending fate."

BOYD'S DANTE.

CHAPTER V.

CONCISE HISTORY OF THE FRANCISCAN ORDER.

"The religious orders which the Church of Rome has made it her care to multiply under her banner, esteeming them her Janissaries, jealous of each other's power, are constantly at war among themselves."

RAFFAELE CIOCCI.

WE have now to direct the reader's attention to the celebrated order of friars, or monks, denominated Franciscans, of which St. Francis was the distinguished founder.

An attempt to compress within narrow limits all the strange incidents connected with the life of this extraordinary man, and the principal constitutions of his sodality, would not be complimentary to the several able writers, who have taken pains to elucidate his history; nor would it be doing justice to the individual himself, whose singular life has furnished them with such ample and valuable materials. So wonderful, however, are many of the circumstances which occurred

through his instrumentality and that of his mendicant associates, that it is quite necessary to take a brief review of them, as characteristic of the memorable personage, whose name, and system of discipline, occupy so prominent a place in the pages of history.

Francis, the son of a wealthy merchant, was born at Assisi, in Italy, A.D. 1181. Upon his recovery from a severe fit of illness, occasioned by an irregular and licentious habit of life, he renounced his former immoral practices, and assumed an extraordinary appearance of sanctity. Having sold all his worldly possessions, he retired from the world, and lived with a few associates in a state of the most abject poverty. Hence originated an order which finally grew so numerous and powerful as to disturb states, and hurl even a pope from his dominions !

This illustrious man died on the 4th of October, 1226, and in 1230 was canonized, and placed in the calendar of saints, by Pope Gregory IX.*

How an order of monks, such as the discalced,

* A writer remarks, " that all who are canonized by the pope cannot be said to be in heaven." The instance of Hermar is a curious one : " for twenty years together after his death, he was honoured for a saint, but afterwards his body was taken up and burnt."—*Note to Lecture on Popery by the Rev. A. Turner, Glasgow, 1837.*

or barefooted Franciscans, possessing few, if indeed any inducements to desert social life, and established on principles so extremely rigorous and austere, should have increased to such an extent, and that so rapidly, is a question which cannot be easily solved. Even the very disgrace consequent upon mendicancy, a primary and essential part of their code, would, one should suppose, be an impediment quite sufficient to check the progress of such an institution. But, as a sensible writer justly remarks, "The ecclesiastics of that age had the happy art of making every thing subservient to their own individual interest, as well as to that peculiar establishment with which they were connected, that the profession of beggary was so far from being looked upon as humiliating, regarded as an honourable, if not the most honourable of all engagements."* Moreover, such a degree of celebrity did these friars attain, that they, together with the Dominicans, or monks of St. Dominic, ruled, not merely all the existing monastic orders of their day, but, what may appear strange to modern ears, when the *infallibility* of the church, or as some would have it, the infallibility of the pope,† is so much

* *Vide* Life of Buchanan, p. 86.

† Not only has the Roman Pontiff's authority been

upheld—even the very court of Rome itself. The pontifical assemblies, as well as the councils

considered of equal weight with that of a General Council, but it has sometimes been actually placed, not only above councils, but even the decrees of the apostles themselves ! Andradius saith :—“ *Liquet eos minime errasse, qui dicunt Romanum Pontificem posse nonnunquam in legibus dispensare a Paulo et primis quatuor conciliis. Minime vero majores nostri relegione et pietate excellentes Apostolorum hæc et quam plurima alia decreta refigere in animum induxissent nisi intellexissent,*” etc.—*Andrad. lib. ii., de Trid. Fid.*

“ It is manifest that those have not erred, who say, that the Roman pontiff can sometimes dispense with obeying the laws of the apostle Paul, and of the four first Councils ; nay, our ancestors, men of great piety and religion, have **BROKEN AND ANNULLED MANY DECREES OF THE APOSTLES !**”

A distinguished Cardinal of the Romish Church writes :—“ *Si Papa erraret in præcipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo virtutes, teneretur Ecclesia credere vitia esse bona et virtutes mala, nisi vellet contra conscientiam peccare.*”—*Bell. L. iv., de Pont. f. cap. 5.*

“ Should the Pope err in commanding vices, and forbidding virtues, the church should be bound to believe that the *vices were good*, and the *virtues bad*, unless she would sin against conscience !”

And again, Pope Innocent III. says :—“ *Secundum plenitudinem potestatis de jure, supra jus, possumus dispensare.*”—*Decret. de concess. præbend. Tit. iii., cap. proposuit.*

“ We may, according to the plenitude of our power, dispense with the law, and above the law !”

of the state, bowed alike implicitly to their dictates, and each acquiesced in their decision.

Although warmly patronised by Pope John XXII. who was once connected with this order, the Franciscans fell into odium and dishonour, notwithstanding their former popularity, owing to the imperious and insolent manner in which, like despotic rulers, they exercised their authority. We find that in many kingdoms and provinces of Europe, councils had assembled with the express design of decidedly opposing them, as well as their peculiar tenets. In like manner did the principal ecclesiastics of the Universities of Paris and Oxford unite their combined and unremitting efforts and energies, with the view of hastening their total abolition and downfall.*

Nor did opposition to these clerical despots terminate here. They and their vices were ridiculed and exposed by various eminent writers; one of the most powerful of whom was the cele-

Even Cardinal Zabari says :—" Quod omnia possint, quidquid liberet, etiam illicita, et sit plusquam Deus." *De Schism. Sul. Serm. Scrip.* p. 703.

"That they might do all things they pleased, even things unlawful, and therefore, more than God could do!"

* Wood's *Antiq. Oxon.* tom. i. p. 150, and tom. ii. p. 61.

brated and learned George Buchanan, who, according to the testimony of the French writer, Le Laboureur, was himself, at one time, connected with the order. Amongst the most distinguished of the works of Buchanan may be classed the "*Somnium*," the "*Alcoranus Franciscanorum*," and the "*Franciscanus*," or the "Franciscan," which latter, together with the satire of the celebrated Sir David Lindsay, entitled "The Three Estates," were made the subject of a drama. The former was acted before James V., and the latter before the king, queen, and courtiers at Linlithgow, on the festival of the Epiphany, A.D. 1539.

However, not a few of those who had the resolution to censure and make an *exposé* of the depravity and ungodliness of these ecclesiastics, experienced the awful effects of their deep-rooted animosity, and were consigned to the flames. The unhappy friar Killore, was one who, in this manner, fell a victim to their rage ; whilst others, among whom was Buchanan, were cast into the dungeons of the Inquisition.*

* The bearing of the court of Inquisition on the domestic and social affections appears in a very appalling light. A system of espionage was instituted, in which no regard was had to the most sacred and endearing ties which bind human beings together. All the charities of

Buchanan, accompanied by eleven other persons, attended the celebrated Govea to the University of Coimbra, in Portugal, in the year 1547, at this time patronised by John III., the existing monarch.

home and of neighbourhood were sacrificed at the shrine of this Moloch of iniquity; and more dismal than the dungeon which the light of heaven was not allowed to enter, and the rack on which the body was lacerated unto agony, and the devouring flames which terminated the life of many a sufferer, were the gloom, and the bondage, and the anguish of spirits, that had endured the violation of nature's holiest and sweetest ties—the tearing asunder of bonds which were stronger than death. There is not within the compass of human language terms that shall adequately describe a system, of which the shadow of death might be regarded as the least formidable of its ministers. In that Pandemonium of horrid darkness and cruelty, it seemed as if the infernal regions had been transferred to the dominions of Popery—as if a legion of satanic fiends had, in mockery of all the principles of justice and of mercy, combined for the destruction and misery of their victims. This court, in the course of eleven years, condemned to various forms of punishment—many of them to the flames—52,855 individuals; and not content with glutting its murderous policy in the land of the living, violated the rest of the grave, disinterred thousands and tens of thousands, and burnt them as an offering to the demon of revenge! “My God,” exclaimed Constantine of la Fuente, “were there no Scythians or cannibals into whose hands to deliver me, rather than to let me fall into the power of these barbarians?”—*Dr. Smyth's Lectures on Popery.*

On being suspected of favouring the principles of the Reformation, he was, together with two other members of the University, seized, and brought up before the diabolical tribunal of the Inquisition; and being privately accused of having eaten flesh-meat during lent, of vilifying the monks, and of being altogether a dangerous and unsafe person, was cast into one of its infernal dungeons—upon whose portals may well be inscribed the epigraph which was written on the doors seen by Dante—

“Per me si va nella citta dolente :
 Per me si va nell' eterno dolore :
 Per me si va tra la perduta genta.”

“Through me you pass into the city of woe :
 Through me you pass into eternal pain :
 Through me among the people lost for aye.”

CANTO iii. l.

It cannot be doubted that the Portuguese ecclesiastics had heard of the severe attacks made on the monastic orders by Buchanan, and therefore they did not let the opportunity escape for gratifying revenge. This persecuted individual, although confined for a year and a half in the prison of the Inquisition, and closely shut up for a few months in a monastery, in order that he might be *edified* by the saintly deportment of its

inmates, and thereby be induced to abandon his heretical opinions, knew not why he was deprived of his liberty, or what acts of his drew down upon him the fierce displeasure of his savage persecutors. Happily, however, he escaped the rack and the flames; and on being finally liberated, with the consent of the king, he embarked from Lisbon for England—leaving with joyful feelings of delight, a country whose very atmosphere was impregnated with the atrocities and savage crimes of its inhabitants—and where men, outwardly professing to be the dispensers of the oracles of God, and the upholders of the Christian faith, were, in truth, nothing less than the propagators of the “doctrines of demons,” and the supporters of the lying impositions of Satan.

“*Monstrum horrendum informe horribile ingens.*”

But to resume. The most inveterate enemies that the Franciscans had to contend against were, strange to say, the monks of St. Dominic !*

“When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war.”

* There is so much impiety connected with the history of the Franciscans, so much cruelty with that of the Dominicans, and so much flagitious and blasphemous imposture with both, that the founders of these several orders can hardly be seen in their true characters.—*Quar. Rev. art. Brit. Monach.*

These fiery bigots, who were, in fact, the principals of the Inquisitional Courts, and the mild dispensers of the milder justice of ecclesiastical rigour, pursued the Franciscans with that peculiar ferocity and savage bitterness for which they were proverbial, as if they were heretics, obstinate and irreclaimable—pursued them as if they disregarded or despised the ordinances of the church, her high apostolic vicar, or her still higher authority—pursued them, finally, until their wrathful, implacable resentment, became somewhat abated by having the satisfaction of consigning to the flames a few of the unfortunate beings who were the objects of their enmity. So much for the unity of the Papal Church and her ecclesiastical orders! This apparent unity is well described by one who said: “Papal uniformity is like the hard and glittering surface of an ice-bound chaos, dazzling without, but imprisoning all within.”* Another writer has justly remarked, that “There is an union in ignorance, as all things are confounded together in the dark.”

But we must hasten to the sequel of the history of the Franciscans.

At length a schism, fraught with dreadful

* Godkin's Guide from the Church of Rome to the Church of Christ. p. 367.

consequences, took place in this distinguished confraternity. The primary causes were a difference of opinion, respecting the particular habit or dress of the order, and the extent to which their worldly possessions should be carried.

Frequent attempts were made by successive pontiffs to mitigate the severity of the constitutions of St. Francis, which were extremely rigid with regard to the possessions of the monks. But these attempts proved unsuccessful. The order, however, became, in a short time, divided into two great parties—the one opposing the jurisdiction of the pope; the other receiving all his decrees and submitting to his authority. The former were denominated “Anti-papal Franciscans,” and consisted of the “Fratricelli, or Minorites,” the “Tertiaries, or Beghards,” and the “Spirituals.” The latter were styled “The Brethren of the Community.” This class having the advantage of superior numbers, laboured very zealously to extinguish and exterminate the “Spirituals.” Clement V. being then pope, and anxiously desirous of effecting a reconciliation between parties so opposed to each other, issued a bull,* enjoining the strictest poverty on the whole order, and prohibiting the possession of any property,

* “Exivi de paradiso.”

except what was indispensable for their immediate wants ; though at the same time, he permitted those of the order who resided in districts or localities where the necessities of life were not attainable, to erect store-houses, or granaries, to which they could resort in times of scarcity. This bull pleased the brethren of the order residing in France extremely well ; but as the Italian brethren were determined on remaining obstinate, they refused to be ruled by the pope's mandate ; and, with the view of freeing themselves from the power and authority of their spiritual rulers, they finally evacuated their country, and established themselves in Sicily.*

After much labour and repeated endeavours on the part of Clement to subdue the turbulent spirit of the French Franciscans, he at length succeeded ; and matters assumed the appearance of going on favourably. But after the decease of this pontiff a very different aspect of affairs presented itself : nor was there a period since the first introduction of the schism, that the interests of the two adverse bodies, the "Spirituals" and the "Brethren of the Community," were so warmly upheld. It is truly horrifying to contemplate the frightful consequences which ensued—so revolting

* Boulay. Hist. Acad. Paris. tom. iv. p. 152.

are they to the best feelings of human nature, that we would be disposed to question their reality, did not the indubitable testimony of history place them on record as facts which cannot be disputed.

Although papal authority and influence were vigorously employed to quench the flame of dissension amongst the two genefic sections of this order, to which we have alluded, it but burned the brighter, and blazed forth with increased strength and fury, in proportion to the efforts made to suppress it. An opportunity was at length afforded of giving vent to a rancour long-cherished and deep-rooted, and of exhibiting it in all its fiendish asperity. After a well concocted conspiracy, one hundred and twenty of the "Spirituals" suddenly came down upon, and most violently attacked, the "Brethren of the Community," in their convents at Narbonne and Beziers,* expelled them from their habitations, and, after denunciations the most terrific, imbrued their hands in the blood of their victims, and left scarcely a remnant to tell the horrible tale.

This awfully tragic occurrence compelled John XXII., who was the successor of Clement, to issue a brief, in order to preserve the public peace,

* A. D. 1314. Mosh. Eccles. Hist. vol. iii. p. 340,

as, from the fact of the citizens of Narbonne favouring the "Spirituals," the probable result would have been riot, confusion, and disorder. At length the pope succeeded in abolishing some of the lesser distinctions of the order ; and after advising the king of Sicily to expel from his dominions the "Spirituals," who resorted thither for self-defence, he commanded the French "Spirituals" to attend a council, to be held at Avignon, and required that they should lay aside their short, straight habits, with the small hoods.

This papal injunction was universally acquiesced in, with the exception of twenty-four brethren, and their leader, Francis Bernard Delitiosi, who fanatically asserted, that the Gospel of Christ was not more sacred, or more to be obeyed, than the rules of St. Francis ; that the pontiffs who permitted the order to erect store-houses and granaries, had sinned most grievously ; and that requiring a change of dress different from that prescribed by their founder, added fearfully to their weight of guilt ! Hereupon pope John becoming exasperated to the highest degree, anathematized these dissentients, and ordered that they should be punished as heretics. Accordingly Delitiosi was apprehended, but ultimately died in confinement ; while four of his followers were condemned to be burned

at Marseilles.* Hence commenced a revival of malignity against the pope and his abettors, by the "Spirituals," who denounced the pope as "Antichrist," and the "Man of Sin," and maintained that he should be deposed for having shed the blood of the saints.

The present aspect of affairs could not be expected to continue long without a change, as each would, doubtless, strive for the mastery. For either the "Spirituals" must be the rulers, or the Roman pontiff's decrees must be obeyed. The pope, therefore, perceiving how little he was respected by these obstinate and tenacious monks, and being highly offended that the term "Antichrist" was applied to him—however deserving of the appellation†—delivered them over to the tender

* A.D. 1318. Argentre, Col. Judic. de novis errorib. tom. i. p. 294.

† Pope Gregory the Great (about the year 594), in one of his letters to John Bishop of Constantinople, and to the Emperor Mauritius and his Empress, saith :—*"Quisquis se universalem Sacerdotem vocat in elatione sua Antichristum præcurrit."* "Whoever in his pride calls himself universal priest, is Antichrist's harbinger." Yet in a few years after (A.D. 606), his own successor assumes this very title, under the name of Boniface III., by the aid of the Emperor Phocas. Cardinal Baronius thus mentions the fact :—"Phocas iratus Ciraco Episcopo Constantinopolitano adjudicavit titulum *Œcumenici Pontifici Romano soli.*"—(Bar. ad A.D. 606.) "Phocas

mercies of their most obdurate enemies, the Dominicans, who were specially empowered and authorised to apprehend them wherever they could be found. These "indefatigable soldiers," we need scarcely inform the reader, executed the papal command with promptitude and rigour: and accordingly several hundred of the devoted Franciscans were condemned to the stake in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany.*

The "Spirituals" became again aroused at the martyrdom of their brethren; and having secured the patronage of Lewis of Bavaria, who assisted them in the promotion of their designs, they succeeded, by repeated intrigues, in persecuting their enemies, the Dominicans, and depriving John XXII. of the popedom. After the death of this pontiff, succeeding popes endeavoured to reconcile these two hostile

being incensed against Ciriacus, Bishop of Constantinople, who had assumed the title, granted the title *Sovereign Pontiff* to the Roman Bishop." Roger Hoveden writes: "That Abbot Johachim, in conversing with Richard I. of England, and Phillip II. of France, on Antichrist, said—' *Quod jam natus est in Civitate Romana et in Sæde Apostolica Sublimabitur.*' "That already he was in Rome, and should be lifted up to the apostolical chair.'" (Hoved. Annal. Post. in Rich. I. p. 681.) And St. Bernard said, "That the popes were the ministers of Christ, and that the *Apocalyptic beast* occupied the chair of St. Peter." —(*Usser. de Christ. Eccl. Sur. et Stat.* c. vii. secs. 5 & 6)

* *Vide* Note to p. 343. vol. iii. Mosh. Eccles. Hist.

factions ; but neither edicts, bulls, or inquisitorial punishments, could effect the desired union. At length, after much entreaty, a division of the order into two bodies was unanimously agreed upon. The one was to be denominated the "Conventual Brethren," and the other, the "Brethren of the Observation."* Thus, as has been ably remarked by one who lately came out of "Babylon"—"Unity being the boasted palladium of the Romish Church, it is necessary that she should see how weak is her battle steed, her invulnerable Achilles."† We cannot more fitly close the present subject, than by referring the reader to what the Rev. M. Brennan, a reformed priest of the Church of Rome, has said respecting these mendicant monks. He observes, that their "austerity, mortification, and holiness, were merely exterior; for the coarse, dirty, disgusting habit and cowl of the filthy Franciscan, served to cover an indulged and well-pampered body. And these worthies were accustomed to riot, and 'drown dull care' in their jovial convents as well as the lord of the soil, or

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. iii. p. 354.

† Narrative by Raffaele Coiocci, formerly a Benedictine and Cistercian monk, student, and Hon. Librarian of the Papal College of San Bernardo, Alle Terme Diocleziane, in Rome. London: 1844.

the pope himself. As to piety or edification, their cloisters exhibited quite the contrary: they were generally scenes of licentiousness, contention, mutual jealousy, bickering, and disorder; and even at this day there is scarcely to be found a single man of spirit or talent in the community of these stupid, ignorant, worthless, over-bearing drones.”*

* Papal Impositions and Monastic Intrigue pourtrayed, &c. page 23. Dublin : 1825.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCIPAL MONASTIC ORDERS EXISTING IN IRELAND—THE VOWS AND INTERNAL DISCIPLINE OF THE MONKS, &c.

“The Court of Rome had a leading self-interested object in every one of its institutions, of which that of monastic orders was not the least powerful or conspicuous. * * * Not a prince in Europe has such a regularly constituted body of *Gens d’armes* as has the pope in these several orders; all devoted to his cause, and obliged by their *vows* to maintain his arrogant power and authority.”—REV. M. BRENNAN, A REFORMED PRIEST.

ALTHOUGH there are various monastic establishments in this country, each having its peculiar appellation, yet there are but three institutions which have obtained any celebrity worthy of notice.* These are denominated the “Cistercians, or Trappists,” the “Christian Brothers,” and the “Presentation Monks.”

The Cistercian order was originally founded towards the close of the eleventh century, by Robert, abbot of Moleme, in Burgundy, who, in order to revive the decaying spirit and discipline

* The several ecclesiastical orders of regulars or friars, are, of course, not included.

of his monastery, retired, with about twenty of the monks, to Cîteaux, in the diocese of Chalons, which was, at this time, a wild and barren wilderness, where he and his associates observed the rules of St. Benedict in all their strictness and severity. This order progressed in so wonderful a manner, that in the following century it was propagated throughout several parts of Europe; and so great was the fame of these monks, that they not only received the most costly and munificent presents and endowments, but were actually assigned the privileges of a spiritual republic, and, in civil as well as ecclesiastical matters, acquired a governing power over every kingdom within the precincts of which they had established themselves. Their progress exceeded that of all other monastic institutions; and in less than a century after the foundation of the order, it boasted of nearly two thousand religious houses.*

The members of the Cistercian order, who planted themselves in this country, were, some few years ago, driven from infidel France,

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. pp. 531, 532. Mabillon's *Annales Benedictines*, vols. v. & vi. Pier le Nain's *Essai de l'Histoire de l'Ordre des Cîteaux*. Paris: 1696.

where they had been imprisoned and treated as common felons. Landing on the shores of hospitable Ireland—whose inhabitants are proverbial for a readiness to shelter the children of misfortune, and to succour the oppressed and destitute—they speedily gained the affections, and found an asylum in the homes, of the humble peasantry, who sympathised with these exiles, as being members of a common faith. Shortly after their arrival, these wandering monastics, headed by their abbot, the Right Rev. Dr. Ryan, fixed their habitation on a wild and mountainous part of a district in the South of Ireland, where they laboured under many disadvantages, and felt the bad effects of a moist and humid atmosphere, so different from the continental climate. Several individuals connected with the order were subsequently dispersed throughout this country, with a view of collecting funds for the erection of a monastery, which would exceed in splendour any other edifice erected for cloistered purposes. Having experienced the good effects of the begging system, and realised a sufficient sum, they erected a splendid monument of monasticism at Mount Melleray, in the county of Waterford, where they now reside. It is well known that Sir Richard Keane, the lord of the soil, granted them

a large tract of mountain land, comprising above 500 acres, at a nominal rent.

This order is considered as second to none but the Carthusian, so called from *Chartraux*, near Grenoble, in Dauphine, which was instituted in the year 1084, by Bruno, a native of Cologne, and canon of the Cathedral of Rheims, in France. It may be here remarked, that "this zealous ecclesiastic, who had neither power to reform, nor patience to bear, the dissolute manners of his archbishop, Manasse, retired from his church, with six of his companions, and having obtained the permission of Hugh, bishop of Grenoble, fixed his residence in a miserable desert. He adopted at first the rule of St. Benedict, to which he added a considerable number of severe and rigorous precepts. His successors, however, went still farther, and imposed upon the Carthusians new laws, much more intolerable than those of their founder; laws which inculcated the highest degrees of austerity that the most gloomy imagination could invent. And yet, notwithstanding all this, it is remarkable, that no monastic society degenerated so little from the severity of their primitive institution and discipline, as this of the Carthusians."*

* Mosheim's *Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. ii. p. 534-535.
Helyot's *Hist. des Ordres*, tom. vii. p. 366.

The Trappists borrow their name from La Trappe, situated on the borders of Perche and Normandy, in which locality Routrou, Count du Perche, in order to fulfil a vow made by him when in danger of being shipwrecked, founded an establishment of the order, A.D. 1140.* With regard to their discipline it will be sufficient to confine our remarks to a delineation of its most prominent features. This order is divided into two classes; the one denominated "Choir Religious," and the other "Lay Brothers." The former are either priests, or candidates for the priesthood, though there are some, who, from affected humility, would not accept that exalted office. The choir monks wear *white* habits or tunics, with an additional garment attached, that covers the head. At the various canonical hours they chaunt the service, or office, of the Romish Church, in the choir of the chapel attached to their monastery. They take the first place in the refectory and dormitory, and are allowed certain other privileges, which it is needless to mention, which are denied to the other monks.

The "Lay Brothers" are, in general, a class of vulgar and illiterate persons, and are distinguished from the "Choir Religious" by a *brown* habit and

* Memoirs of Count D'Auvergne.

hood, which descends so low as almost to conceal their faces from observation. These individuals do not join in the Latin office, but as a substitute, recite, or mutter over, a number of *paters* and *aves*, which they reckon on their many-stringed beads—the only mode of performing devotional exercises practised by the ignorant devotees of the Church of Rome, for which cause Mantuan has very justly styled their religion—

“ Religionem,
Quæ filo insertis numerat sua murmura baccis ;”

or “a religion that numbers their murmurs by berries filed upon a string.” Might not this kind of prayer be truly likened to the *Βαττολογία*, or vain repetitions of the Gentiles,* which our blessed Lord condemned, and against which he cautioned his followers, saying—“ When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do ; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye, therefore, like unto them.”†

The beads used by these monks cannot be considered mere ordinary helps to prayer, as they are

* “ Ohe, jam desine Deos, uxor gratulando obtundere ;
Nisi illos tuo ex ingenio judicas,
Set nihil credas intelligere, nisi idem dictum est centies.”

Terence, Heautont, act v. scene 1.

† Matt. vi. 7, 8.

blessed by the "father-abbot," and are consequently supposed to be productive of spiritual benefit to those who make use of them; in other words, they obtain the boon of an **INDULGENCE**. This being the proper place to allude to the origin and properties of indulgences, we shall introduce the subject by way of digression, and then return to the discipline of the Trappists.

Indulgences were first established by Pope Clement VI., A.D. 1350, in his extraordinary bull "*Unigenitus de pœnitentiis et remissionibus*," thirty years after the first jubilee.* The object which the crafty "head of the church" had in view was, to encourage customers to crowd to the holy city, the capital of Italy, at the period of the second jubilee, which was held during his pontificate, as if to confirm the expression, that "gain is godliness." So true are the words of the poet—

" Venalia nobis

Templa, Sacerdotes, altaria, sacra, coronæ,
Ignes, thura, preces—cœlum est venale Deusque."

Clement enacted that a jubilee should take place twice in every century, although his infallible predecessor, Boniface VIII., had decreed that this season of rejoicing should occur but once in a

* This novel doctrine was warmly disputed by Francis de Mayronis.

hundred years.* And among the inducements held out to the "faithful," by pope Leo XII., in the bull for the jubilee in 1825, to persuade them to go to Rome, was that of "*beholding the cradle of Christ*!"† The following extract from this bull, which is dated Rome, May 24, 1824, exhibits the power claimed and assumed by the Papal Antichrist, and the necessary conditions on which his pardon is obtained :—

"During this year of jubilee, we mercifully in the Lord, grant and impart **THE MOST PLENARY AND COMPLETE INDULGENCE, REMISSION, AND PARDON OF ALL THEIR SINS**, to all the faithful in Christ, of both sexes, who are truly penitent, and have confessed, and have refreshed themselves with the holy communion, provided, if Romans or inhabitants of the city, they shall have devoutly visited these churches of the city, that of the blessed Peter and Paul, of St. John Lateran, and of Mary Maggiore (or the greater), at least once a day for *thirty days*, whether successive or interrupted, natural or even ecclesiastical; but if foreigners, or in any other respect strangers, they must have devoutly visited these churches *at least fifteen days* : provided also, that they shall

* Baluzii. Vitæ Pontif. Avenion. tom. i. p. 287.

† Christi Incunabula. p. 38. edit. Paris.

have poured forth *pious* prayers to God for the EXALTATION of the holy church, the EXTIRPATION OF HERESIES, the concord of the Catholic princes, and the salvation and tranquillity of Christendom."

"*Pro sanctæ Ecclesiæ exaltatione, HÆRESIUM EXTIRPATIONE, Catholicorum Principum concordia, et Christiani populi salute.*"*

The Council of Trent teaches, "That after God has justified the penitent sinner by his grace, and remitted the guilt of his eternal punishment, yet his sin is not so wholly blotted out, but that there still remains the guilt of temporal punishment due to his justice, which debt the pardoned sinner must discharge either in this life by penance, or hereafter in purgatory, before he can enter the kingdom of heaven."† And "the Council further teacheth, that Christ has conferred on his church the power of granting *indulgences*, which extend to this very debt, or satisfaction, and by which

* P. 32. Paris edit. chez Adrien le Clerc, imprimeur de N. S. P. le Pape et de Mgr. l'Archeveque de Paris, 1824.

† Si quis post acceptam justificationis gratiam, cuilibet peccatori pœnitenti ita culpam remitti, et reatum æternæ pœnæ deleri dixerit, ut nullus remaneat reatus pœnæ temporalis exsolvendæ vel in hoc sæculo, vel in futuro in Purgatorio, antequam ad regna cœlorum aditus patere possit: anathema sit.—*Con. Trid. sess. vi. can. 30.*

she can remit it wholly, or in part, in certain circumstances, and that the use of these *celestial treasures* is very salutary to the faithful, and must be retained in the church.* Even these “celestial treasures,” as they are foolishly and blasphemously termed, can be applied to the souls in purgatory, and have the power of effectually delivering them from that dreadful prison of torment.† What an ingenious invention, and fertile plan for extracting money from the pockets of the rich!‡ As the Romish doctors are very apt to misquote the words of Scripture, may not the exclamation of our Lord have undergone a slight alteration under the correction of these infallible guides, “How hardly shall they that are *poor* enter into the kingdom of heaven?”

Indulgences are of two kinds; partial and plenary. The former, which any bishop has the

* *Decretum de Indulgentiis. Cum potestas conferendi Indulgentias a Christo Ecclesiæ concessa sit., etc.—Sess. xxv. cap. ix.*

† Bellar. Lib. I. de Indulgent. c. ii. et iii.

‡ A few years ago the following statement was posted upon the walls of the chapels of Madrid:—“The Sacred and the Royal Bank of Piety has relieved from purgatory from its establishment in 1721, to November, 1827, 1,041,999 souls, at an expense of £1,734,703; for which 558,921 masses were required. Consequently each soul cost half-a-mass, or 33s. 4d.”—*Prot. Jour.* 1834. p. 662.

power of dispensing, is a remission of, or a release from, part "of the temporal punishment due to sin :"* the latter, which is at the exclusive disposal of the pope, is a full and entire pardon of sin, and of the satisfaction which it has incurred. Nay more, special indulgences have not unfrequently been granted, on payment of certain stipends, for crimes about to be committed—absolving the parties who make the purchase, and their friends, or accomplices, from every stain of guilt. Now, a plenary indulgence can very easily be obtained—even with far less difficulty oftentimes than a partial or limited one. For instance: going to confession, and receiving the "idol god" on a particular festival of a saint, and praying for the utter *extirpation* of heretics; wearing the "scapular" of the Carmelites; the "belt" of the Augustinians; the "cord" of the Franciscans:† the "white scapular" of the Dominicans; or any other badge of an order; kissing or praying

* Dr. Challoner's Cath. Christ. p. 107.

† A rich merchant in Paris, in meriment, told the friars of St. Francis, that they wore a rope about their bodies, but St. Francis should once have been hanged, but was redeemed by the pope on this condition, that all his life after he should wear a rope, but they in earnest got judgment against him that he should be hanged for it.—*Doctor Taylor's Romish Fornance.*

before a particular picture or image of a saint ; pronouncing certain words, such as "*Jesu, Maria ;*" with a number of other very simple matters, easy of performance, and quite sufficient to ensure the signal and distinguished privilege of a plenary absolution. It is recorded, " that Pope John XXII. granted a pardon or indulgence of one million of years, for devoutly saying three prayers written in the chapel of the holy cross in Rome ;"* and " for repeating the prayer beginning with the words '*O bone Jesu,*' power is granted to change the pains of hell into those of purgatory, and after that, those pains again into the joys of heaven !" This prayer was placed in St. Peter's church at Rome, contiguous to the high altar where the pope celebrates the Mass sacrifice.† Now, is it not surprising, as several individuals in "*articulo mortis*" have performed the requisitions to which a plenary pardon is affixed, that priests will repeatedly celebrate the sacrifice of the mass, and repeat certain forms of prayer, for the spirit's repose of such persons ; at the same

* Salisbury Primer.

† Horæ B. Virginis Mariæ ad Salisburiensis ecclesiæ ritum cum orationibus et indulgentiis, etc. Paris, 1529. Birckber's Evidence, p. i. p. 70. London, 1637.

time being perfectly cognizant of their having previously received, by virtue of a papal grant, ample and entire forgiveness? This simple fact furnishes evident proof that those teachers of "lying signs and wonders," cannot believe the tenets which they themselves and the councils of their church inculcate, and in which their "subjects" are required to place implicit and perfect confidence! Such is the genius of Popery!

We have already stated, that indulgences, or licences to commit various crimes, have been bountifully dealt out by the Church of Rome, to such persons as would be credulous enough to purchase them. We need but refer for confirmation of this statement to a work printed at Paris, A.D. 1500, by Tossan Denis, and re-printed in 1520, 1545, and 1625, entitled, "*Taxa Camerae, seu cancellariæ Apostolicæ.*" "The tax of the apostolical chamber of chancery." Of this production the Romish writer, Espencæus, says, "It is a book in which a man may learn more wickedness than in all the summaries of vices published in the world; and yet to them that will pay for it, there is given a license and absolution for the most horrid crimes. There is a price set down to his absolution that hath killed his father, mother,

brother, sister, or wife," &c. &c.* The following are a few of the crimes mentioned in this infamous work, with the sums to be paid for obtaining pardon :—

" For simony	...	...	...	£0	7	6
For sacrilege	...	...	...	0	10	6
For taking a false oath	...	...	...	0	9	0
For robbery	...	...	...	0	12	0
For a layman for murdering a layman				0	7	6
For him that hath killed his father				0	10	6
For him that hath killed his mother				0	10	6
For him that hath killed his wife				0	10	6
For a man to change his vow	...			0	15	0
To eat flesh and white meats in lent, and other fasting days	...	...	...	0	10	6
For a priest keeping	*	*	*	0	10	6
For the remission of a third part of one's sins	...	...	...	7	10	0†

* Digress. 2 ad. cap. 1. Epist. ad Titum.

† A certain nobleman told Tetzel, the chief preacher of indulgences, that he had a mind to commit a *very heinous sin*, and desired an indulgence or present pardon for it. For a great sum of money he granted it; the nobleman pays it down, and receives his bull. Afterwards this nobleman took occasion to meet Tetzel in a certain wood, and breaking open his chest of indulgences, robbed him. When Tetzel threatened him with all manner of curses, the nobleman showed him his bull that he had paid so dear for, and laughing at him, told him, *this was the very sin he had a mind to commit*, when he was fully absolved."—*Cheminitius. Exam. Con. Trid.* p. 745.

We are unwilling to give offence to delicate minds by quoting the entire bill of charges :—

“ Thus to the Pope all power is given
To shut or ope’ the gates of heaven ;
To pardon sins of every price,
And make vice virtue—virtue vice ! !”

Pope Innocent VIII. was either the author or enlarger of the “ Rules of the chancery tax,” which were widely circulated, and were also published at Rome, A.D. 1514, and at Cologne, A.D. 1515.* It is a matter of certainty that the sacred treasury of the Vatican had been, for a long period, enriched to a large amount, by the sale of those “ celestial treasures” of the church. In Zurich alone, not less than 120,000 ducats had been collected by Sampson, a Franciscan friar, for such dispensations.†

We are informed on the authority of the “ Fasciculus Rerum,” that “ a number of Roman Princes assembled at Nuremburgh, A.D. 1522, and 1523, and stated a hundred grievances : the third is about the increase of the intolerable burden of indulgences, by which, under a show of piety to churches, or for an expedition against the Turks,

* Bishop Jeremy Taylor’s Dissuasive from Popery.

† By the sale of indulgences a portion was raised for the lady of Franceschetto Cibo, an illegitimate son of Pope Innocent III.

the popes suck the marrow of their estates, and to heighten the imposture, they say, that by their hireling criers and preachers, Christian piety is banished, while to advance their markets, they cry up their wares, for the granting of wonderful, unheard of, *peremptory pardons*, not only of sins already committed, but of sins that shall be committed, and also the sins of the dead; so that by the sale of these wares, together with being spoiled of our money, Christian piety is extinguished, while any one may promise himself impunity, upon paying the rate that is set upon the sin he hath a mind to commit. Hence, * * *
 * * * perjuries, murders, thefts, &c., and all manner of wickedness, have at once their offspring. What wickedness will mortal man be afraid to commit, when they promise themselves *licence and impunity*, in sinning while they live, and, for a little more money, indulgences may be purchased for them when they are dead.”*

“I have now in my custody,” writes Archbishop Secker, “a plenary indulgence granted, for a small piece of gold, at Rome, this very year,† to an absolute stranger, for himself, for his kindred to the third degree, and to thirty persons more,

* Fascicul. rerum. expetend. fol. 177-178. † A.D. 1745.

for whose names a proper blank is left in the instrument." Another writer says: "I learn on good authority that there are among the MSS. in the Dublin College Library, two indulgences, which were purchased from the late Pope Pius VI. One of them was given to Edward Murphy, Esq., and cost, including the parchment and the trouble of writing, expense of gilding, &c., the sum of *sixteen shillings and three pence*! It not only absolves the said Edward Murphy, and all his relations, within the third degree, from all their sins, but gives them power to include within his charter any fifty of his friends at the moment of their departure from life; and all this for *three crowns of money*! There is another similar bull preserved in the same box."*

Such is the manner by which the Church of Rome deceives her members; and not content with depriving them of the spiritual benefits that the perusal of God's holy word would be the instrument of conferring, she gives a stone in place of bread, and deludes them by all sorts of fables, frauds, and impositions, in order to extort money for the purpose of supporting an impious and an apostate court, and

* Lecture on Popery by the Rev. M. Willis. Glasgow, 1837.

to aid in the upholding of a cause opposed alike to righteousness and truth.* Little wonder that the infidel pontiff, Leo X., should exclaim, as Cardinal Bembo acquaints us, "*Quam prosit nobis hæc fabula Jesu Christi!*" And well did the famous F. Petrarch, who flourished nearly two centuries before Luther, depict the character of the Romish apostacy, when he exclaimed:—

"Fontana di dolore, albergo d'ira,
Scola d'errori, e tempio d'heresia;
Gia ROMA, hor Babilonia, falsa e ria,
Per cui tanto piange e si sospira;
O fucina d'inganni, o prigion d'ira,
Ove i buon muore et i mal si nutre e cria,
Di vivi inferno un gran miracol sia,
Se Christo teco al fine non s'adira."

Sonnet 108. tom. 4. Basil.

But to resume. The "lay brothers" perform the drudgery of the kitchen, and act generally in the capacity of servants; but they are under precisely the same discipline, in all other respects, as the "choir monks." The members of both denominations sleep in one spacious apartment, having a *mat* for a couch, which accommodation, trifling as it is, was denied them on the Continent. They rise at the early hour of one in the morning,

* *Vide* Robertson's Hist. of Chas. V. vol. ii. p. 30.
Robertson's History of America, note 52.

and are spared the inconvenience of dressing as they do not take off their clothes ; they assist at, and celebrate, several masses each day ; have long mental and vocal dovotional engagements ; wear hair-cloth next their skin to torture and annoy, with a view of increasing their merit in the sight of God ; work much in the fields ; keep *perpetual* silence, expressing their wants but by signs ; observe two lenten seasons in the year ; partake of neither flesh nor fish, at their scanty meals, which generally are composed of little more than brown, hard bread, manufactured by themselves ; and administer to each other on each Friday throughout the year, the discipline, or flagellation,—an act of penance made more painful, and, of course, more meritorious, by the solemn recital of the psalm “ *Miserere mei Deus.*” * A grave is always prepared to receive, as a tenant, within its cold embraces, the miserable being who by extreme voluntary suffering is fast approaching to its

* This mode of torture, like most of the other puerile and wicked practices in the Romish Church, is of Pagan origin. The priests of Baal, like the Cistercians, had the practice among them of whipping, lacerating, and scourging themselves, until the blood came ; and the priests of the goddess Cybele, or Bellona, were wont to cut themselves with knives and lancets.—*Pictet. Huit Sermons sur l'Examen des Religions*, p. 261. edit. Genève. 1716.

gloomy and noisome mansion, and where no lamp of faith can ever cheer or irradiate its gloominess and sable darkness. Sunk in the depths of superstition, and ignorant of the Gospel, they cannot venture to trust in the exclusive righteousness of Him, who “died a ransom for all,” and whose blood “cleanseth from all sin;” but they labour foolishly, unprofitably, and sinfully, to weave a robe of their own righteousness, and strive to wash away from their souls, by a number of penitential exercises, those stains, which the application of the precious blood of the Saviour can alone effectually eradicate or cleanse—being unacquainted with the saying of the apostle, that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”*

Both the choir and lay monks make vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience;† and by

* Rom. x. 4.

† These vows are not profitable, much less necessary, but pernicious to the Christian church. From the vow of *continence* arose abominable filthinesses of all kinds in the monks cloysters. From the vow of feigned *poverty* arose so many kinds of unprofitable drones, which devour the honey of the sedulous bees. From the vow of blinde and absolute *obedience*, flow such execrable insolencies against the lives of princes, and such horrible treasons as have frequently been perpetrated by the Jesuits.—*Leigh's Body of Divinity*. London, 1654. lib. viii. p. 743.

virtue of a bull, issued by one of the occupiers of the Papal chair, confirming the order, have the privilege extended to them of making these vows perpetual. Hence, after a trying noviciate of a few years, the benighted and unsocial monk becomes bound to his gloomy cloister, where he strives, by the practice of rigid observances, either to obtain an increase of merit, or, with a disgust of life, to hasten the termination of an existence which an all-wise Creator had bestowed for social purposes, and the advancement of objects beneficial to the human family. Thus does the unhappy solitary frustrate and neutralise the designs of heavenly wisdom, and, in the words of the poet—

“ Sets superstition high on virtue’s throne,
Then thinks his Maker’s temper like his own ;
Hence are his altars stained with reeking gore,
As if he could atone for crimes by more.
Thus, whilst offended heaven he strives in vain
T’ appease by fasts, and voluntary pain,
Ev’n in repenting, he provokes again.”

Nor are the words which Minutius Felix addressed to the devotees of the heathen divinities, who used in like manner, to cut and slash themselves in honour of their gods, inapplicable to those monks : “ O, ye heathens !” said he, “ what infatuation, what frenzy has seized upon you, that you thus dishonour

yourselves on pretence of honoring your gods ? You supplicate your gods with the mouths of your wounds. It were better to have no religion at all than be of such a religion. Certainly those who are guilty of such fanatical excesses must be lost to all reason and common sense !”

We shall now notice the order of monks denominated “ Christian Brothers,” or “ Brothers of the Christian Schools.”

This order is a branch of a society which was first planted in Paris towards the close of the seventeenth century, by John Baptist de la Salle.* Prior to the French Revolution, it possessed many establishments throughout the Continent of Europe and the French Colonies ; but they were subsequently abolished, with the exception of two monasteries in Italy. At length Napoleon re-established the order ; though its progress was scarcely perceptible until the restoration of the Bourbon Family to the throne of France, under whose gracious auspices it once more began to flourish. Since the period of the accession of Louis Philippe to the throne, its increase appears to be still more visible. In France alone the Christian Brothers possess about three hundred religious houses ; in the Colonies,

* *Vide* Life of the Ven. B. J. De la Salle, by the Christian Brothers. Dublin : Powell, Thomas-street.

two ; in Rome, and other parts of Italy, eight. By a brief issued by Pope Pius VII. in 1821, the monastic establishment, which was originally founded at Waterford, A.D. 1802, by Mr. Edmond G. Rice, was confirmed, and the order extended to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.* Accordingly, at the present day, there are several institutions of the kind in this country, and a few in England, settled by papal authority.†

The monks rise every morning throughout the year at five o'clock, and proceed to the chapel of their monastery, where they spend the greater part of two hours in meditation and vocal prayer. During meals the strictest silence is always

* The office of Superior General of the Order of Christian Brothers in Ireland, was resigned in July, 1838, by the late E. G. Rice, of Waterford, founder of the society in England and Ireland, and which, by a Bull of Pius VII., February, 1821, was confirmed as a religious order.

† This clearly exhibits the spiritual jurisdiction which Papal pontiffs wickedly assume over kings and emperors. The very pope alluded to, in his bull "*Ad Perpetuam rei Memoriam*," dated from the church of Santa Maria, the Major at Rome, the 10th of July, 1809, uses these emphatic words :—"Let them once again understand that, by the law of Christ their sovereignty is subjected to our throne !!!"—Sabine's Hist. Christ. Church, chap. i. cent. 19. p. 553. edit. London

observed; but in order to relieve the *tedium* which would otherwise exist, one of the novices is appointed to read some portion of what would be termed a "pious book." Indeed, during my sojourn amongst them I have not heard but a trifling portion of the word of God read; and even on those occasions, which were, like angels' visits, "few and far between," but a few sentences each time; whilst lying and foolish legends were dealt out profusely, chiefly with the view of edifying the young disciples. Those of the community who are efficient preside over the schools, whilst others, who are not engaged in the "temporalities," are principally occupied in the performance of a routine of superstitious and frivolous obligations. There are two hours set apart each day for social conversation, or recreation; and certainly such an arrangement has the effect of rendering the weariness and solitariness of the cloister more supportable, and, physically speaking, less injurious. There are certain times set apart by the rules for scientific and literary studies. At ten o'clock, P.M., the brothers retire to their respective apartments. Shortly afterwards all lights are extinguished, and one of the novices goes to the door of each cell, saying, "*Benedicamus Domino*," which is immediately followed by

the response "*Deo Gratias*," from the individual within. By the toll of a large bell the monks are summoned to their various exercises. There are no particular days of fasting prescribed by the rules of the order, with the exception of the ordinary seasons marked out by the authority of the church, nor are the members of it prohibited from making use of any kind of food that they may desire.

The rules for the guidance of the novices are much more rigorous than those laid down for the professed brothers. The former are not permitted to mingle or converse with the latter, nor even to occupy the same foot-way when outside the walls of their cloister. On the first entrance of a young man into the institute, he is embraced by all the novices, and conducted to the apartment, denominated the "Noviciate;" and, after the expiration of a few days, is put on a "retreat" for a term of twenty or thirty days, during which period the strictest silence is imposed upon him. Human nature, constituted as it is, is scarcely proof against the physical evils resulting from so unremitting a course of mental exercises as is assigned to the poor postulant, during this and the succeeding seasons of trial, by the master of novices, who keeps a watchful eye upon all his actions.

And here I feel constrained to advert to a circumstance which, though trifling in itself, yet strikingly exemplifies the fact, that Romanism is but another name for idolatry and superstition, and that monastic asylums are the hot-houses in which iniquitous and unscriptural practices are reared and brought to maturity.

Having entered, some few years ago, the monastery of the Christian Brothers, in Richmond-street, Dublin; and on being conducted to that part of the house assigned for the Postulants, my attention was drawn by the Master of Novices (who was truly a man of superior attainments and most gentlemanly deportment) to an image of the Virgin Mary, made of plaister of Paris, which was placed upon a small altar adjoining the corridore of the noviciate. This gentleman being acquainted with the circumstance of my having deserted the paternal roof without permission, or even without giving the least intimation of my intention—having considered it a pious severity and a meritorious duty to act in such a manner*—

* Si currerint tibi Pater et Mater ingressure Monasterium, et monstraverint ubera et lacrymis suis te voluerint retrabere, contemne lacrymas, et conculca pedibus parentes, nudusque fuge ad crucem Christi.—
Vox Hieronimi; impia hæc et diabolica vox Lutherus.

addressed me, in the most solemn and impressive manner, thus:—"You have, dear brother, separated yourself from your dearest connexions, and from the world; and, with a resolution praiseworthy and becoming, have cut asunder even the ties of blood; but you have made a profitable exchange in forsaking an earthly for a heavenly parent." Then pointing to the figure, he exclaimed, "Behold your mother now! her affection towards you will never become abated; and, if you prove yourself a faithful imitator of her virtuous and angelic life, she will finally conduct you to glory." I have frequently observed the young men, in the warmth of their devotion, kiss, with the greatest ardour and intenseness of affection, the feet of this image of clay; and none either passed or re-passed, without making their obeisance to the Madonna. This idolatrous doctrine of image-worship is in strict accordance with the laws of the Tridentine Council, though diametrically opposed to reason and the commands of God. What saith the Council?—

"Moreover, images of Christ, or of the Virgin Mother of God, and of other saints, must be provided and retained, in churches especially; and to them must due honour and *worship* be imparted; not that confidence is to be put in them, as did the

heathens of old who placed their hope in their idols, but because the honour thus paid them is referred to their prototypes; so that by these images we kiss, and in whose presence we, with uncovered head, prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ, and worship these saints whose likenesses they bear.* Romish writers have absurdly attempted to draw nice distinctions between the various kinds of worship, denominated *latria*, *hyperdulia*, and *dulia*. What do the majority of Romanists, brought up in ignorance, as if it were the "mother of devotion," know of such distinctions? It is well known that their adoration, in most instances, terminates with the object before which they bow the knee. Even amongst the more enlightened and better educated, priestly definitions of the degrees of worship are not

* *Imagines porrò Christi, Deiparæ Virginis, et aliorum sanctorum, in templis præsertim habendas et retinendas, eisque debitum honorem et venerationem impertiendam, non quod credatur inesse aliqua in iis divinitas vel virtus, propter quam sint colendæ; vel quod fiducia in imaginibus sit figenda, veluti olim fiebat e Gentibus, quæ in idolis spem suam collocabant, sed quoniam honos qui eis exhibetur refertur ad prototypa quæ illæ repræsentant; ita ut per imagines, quas osculamur et coram quibus caput aperimus et procumbimus, Christum adoremus, et Sanctos, quorum illæ similitudinem gerunt, veneremur," &c. — *Con. Trid. Sess. xxv. de Invoc. venerat. — et Sanctor. Sacr. Imag.**

attended to; and the influence of superstition leads them to forget the Deity in the representation so strongly recommended to their veneration and respect by their spiritual guides. Religious enthusiasm, emanating from gross and erroneous views of the object of worship, leads necessarily to the rankest species of idolatry.*

It is an incontrovertible fact, that devout Romanists, or devotees, are more warmly attached to the Virgin than to Christ; and in illustration I need but refer to the circumstance of the coronation of the image of the Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception, which event took place in the church of Gesu Vecchio, in the city of Naples, so recently as the 30th of December, 1826. At the time that the crown was placed upon the head of the infant Jesus, there was a general movement; but when the Madonna was crowned, the multitude could no longer contain

* Many writers in the Romish Church deny that there is any difference between the two words, and admit, "that it is one and the same virtue of religion which containeth them both! If some say, that it is idolatry and mortal sin to give *latria* to a saint or image, which ought only to receive *dulium*; and if others tell you, that these words signify the same thing, let a man do what he will, he incurs the guilt of idolatry, in the opinion either of the one or the other of these parties."—*Hamilton's Tracts*, p. 35.

themselves; and the shout of the men, the cries, the out-stretched imploring hands, the tears and convulsive shrieks of the women, showed how vehemently and profoundly they adored the Virgin, and worshipped her image. After this pompous ceremony was ended, the Archbishop of Naples, and priests, pronounced certain sentences and responses, in which the unlimited sovereignty of the Virgin, over all nature, was unhesitatingly proclaimed.* There is not a district in the Papal states, where popery reigns triumphant, in which similar scenes are not enacted. Even Cassander, a Romish writer, acknowledges, that "the worship paid by the people to images and statues, was equal to the worst of the ancient pagans."† And so intent were the popish clergy on perpetuating image-worship in England that, according to Sir Edward Coke, an express law was passed, by which it was enacted, "That any persons who affirm images ought not to be worshipped, be holden in strong prison until they take an oath and swear to worship them."‡

Let us now hear Bellarmine, Thomas Aquinas,

* Christ. Exam. Feb. 1827, pp. 149, 151.

† Nihil a nostris reliqui factum esse videatur, &c.—
Geo. Cassand. in consult. de imagin. &c. pp. 175–176.

‡ Inst. iii. p. 49. Rich. II cap. 5.

and the Councils of Frankfort and Nice, on image-worship:—

Bellarmino writes:—"The question proposed is, with what sort of worship are images to be honoured? There are three opinions.

"The second opinion is, that the same honour is due to the image as to the exemplar, and thence that the image of Christ is to be adored with the worship of *latría*; the image of the Blessed Virgin with the worship of *hyperdulía*; and the images of the other saints with the worship of *dulía*. Thus, Alexander, part 3, quest. 30, last art.; the Blessed Thomas, part 3, quest. 25, art. 3; and thus also Cajetan, the Blessed Bonaventure, Marsilius, Almayn, Carthusian, and others."*

The Angelic doctor, Thomas Aquinas, says:—"It is thus, therefore, to be decided, that no reverence is due to the image of Christ in respect of its being any substance, say carved or painted

* Proponitur quæstio, quo genere cultus imagines sint honorandæ. Tres sunt sententiæ.

Secunda opinio est, quod idem honor debeatur imagini et exemplari; et proinde Christi imago sit adoranda cultu latriæ; Beatæ Mariæ cultu hyperdulæ; sanctorum aliorum cultu dulæ. Ita Alexander, 3 par. quæst. 30, art. ult. B. Thomas, 3 par. quæst. 25, art. 3; et ibidem Cajetanus, B. Bonaventura, Marsilius, Almayn, Carthusianus, et alii.—*Bellarminus de Imag. Sanctis*, c. xx. lib. 2.

wood, because reverence is due only to a rational nature. It remains, therefore, that reverence is shown to it only in respect of its being an image; and thus it follows, that *the same reverence should be paid to the image of Christ as to Christ himself!* Since, therefore, Christ is adored with the worship of *latria*, it follows that his *image* is to be adored with the worship of *latria*.*

Thus saith the second Council of Nice:—
 “And to give them the salutation and honorary worship, not indeed the true *latria* which is according to the faith, which belongs to the divine nature only. * * * *

For the honour of the image passes to the prototype, and he who worships the image, worships the substance of him who is depicted.”†

* Sic ergo dicendum est, quod imagini Christi in quantum est res quædam (puta lignum sculptum vel pictum) nulla reverentia exhibetur, quia reverentia non nisi rationali naturæ debetur. Relinquitur ergo quod exhibeatur ei reverentia solùm, in quantum est imago, et sic sequitur quod eadem reverentia exhibeatur imagini Christi, et ipsi Christo. . Cùm ergò Christus adoretur adoratione latriæ, consequens est, quod ejus imago sit adoratione latriæ adoranda. — *Tertia pars Summæ Theol. S. Thomæ Aquinatis. Romæ in ædibus populi Romani. 1686. Quæst. 25, Art. 3.*

† Καὶ ταῦταις ἀσπασμὸν καὶ τιμητικὴν προσκυνῆσιν ἀπονέμειν, οὐ μὲν τὴν κατὰ πίστιν ἡμῶν λαθὲν λατρείαν, ἣ πρέπει μόνῃ τῇ θεῷ φύσει.

Ἡ γὰρ τῆς εἰκόνος τιμὴ ἐπὶ τὸ Πρωτότυπον διαβαίνει. Καὶ ὁ προσκυνῶν τὴν εἰκόνα, προσκυνεῖ ἐν αὐτῇ τὴν ἐγγραφόμενὴν τὴν ὑποστάσιν. — *Concilium Nicænum. 2. Labbæi et Cossartii.*

At the Council of Frankfort, held A.D. 794, "The question respecting the recent Council of Constantinople, which was held concerning images, was brought upon the carpet, in which it was written, that those should be accursed who did not pay service or adoration to images, as to the Divine Trinity. Our above-mentioned most holy fathers *despised service and adoration in every way*, and, with one agreement, *condemned them*."* We have, therefore, the Councils of Constantinople and Frankfort, condemning and anathematising those of Nice and Trent ! Let us hear no more of the *unanimity* and *infallibility* of the Church of Rome ! Ecclesiastical history abounds with instances of decrees, passed by one infallible head, reversed by another ; and councils have dared to nullify proceedings established by former councils, as if, in asserting infallibility, to fulfil the proverb—"*Lucus a non lucendo*."

* Allata est in medium quæstio de novâ Græcorum synodo, quam de adorandis imaginibus Constantinopoli fecerunt, in quâ scriptum habebatur, ut qui imaginibus sanctorum ita ut Deificæ Trinitati, servitium aut adorationem non impenderent, anathema judicarent. Qui supra sanctissimi patres nostri *omminodis* adorationem et servitutem contempserunt, atque consentientes condemnauerunt.—*Concilium Francofordiense, etc. Can. 2. Lubbæi et Cossarti.*

But to resume. After the expiration of a few months the postulants receive the habit or badge of their order, when an imposing and *ad captandum* ceremony attends its reception. On this occasion, strange to say, they renounce the name conferred at baptism, and assume that of some saint in the Romish calendar. Once in each day, or more frequently, the younger brothers are required to make a public confession of their faults to the Master of Novices; and after having received absolution, and being enjoined a suitable penance, they kiss the floor in token of obedience and humility.

Strict discipline regulates their every movement. They are seldom permitted to go beyond the precincts of their gloomy dwelling; and even when this privilege is enlarged, they are accompanied by a professed monk, but more generally by the person to whom the responsibility of their training is entrusted. During their probationary term, which is usually about two years, they are occasionally obliged to brush out and dust the house, to kindle the fire in the novitiate, and to perform other menial occupations. A neglect of the duty imposed upon them would subject them to the mortification of having to take their meals on their

knees, or to some other penitential act.* They are never permitted to correspond with their relations or friends, nor are they allowed to receive letters, unless all epistolary communications are first submitted to the strict *surveillance* of the superior or master of novices.

One monk is not permitted to enter the cell or chamber of another, nor to converse with his brother without direct permission from the superior. There is a chapel attached to the monastery, in which the transubstantiated wafer is constantly preserved, and a perpetual light, or vestal fire, is kept continually burning in its honour, together with various sacred relics—all of which are richly enshrined, and placed on the altar to attract attention, and to elicit pious and devotional feelings.† The first Sabbath in each month, and

* In a convent in the United States, the inmates, for slight acts of disobedience, were subject to many austere penances, as remaining prostrate for a length of time, making the sign of the cross on the floor with the tongue, eating a crust of bread for the morning's "portion," kissing the floor, kneeling for a considerable time, and other similar degradations.—*Cobbin's Book of Popery*, p. 21.

† The Pagans, in like manner, consecrated to their gods a variety of images, both embossed and painted, and placed them in their temples, raised them upon their

the nine days preceding the festival of the Incarnation of our Lord, are seasons of the greatest solemnity with the Brothers of the Christian Schools, on which occasions they observe silence and retirement. Like all other monastic societies, they vow poverty, chastity, and obedience ; but they are not permitted by their constitutions either to wear the "surplice," or to take part in the "divine office."

Having thus given a brief account of the discipline to which these monks are subjected, I would conclude with the remark, that there are among them men of the most cultivated minds, and sincere in their profession, who, were it not for the ruinous and soul-destroying system with which they are intimately connected, would become luminaries of the first magnitude in the literary, and be ornaments and blessings to the social world.

The constitutions of the Presentation establishment are similar to those of the order we have just been considering, as the founder of it was

altars, enshrined them in a costly manner, crowned them with flowers, and smoked them with incense.—*Huit. Serm. sur l'Examen des Religions*, p. 264. edit. Genève, 1716.

originally one of the Christian Brothers ; but feeling that their rules and discipline were too rigid, he established a society upon less objectionable and more lenient principles, having previously obtained, for that purpose, the pope's dispensation. The Presentation Monks have but two establishments—one in Cork, and the other in Killarney—although some few years ago they also possessed a third in the neighbourhood of Youghal ; but the late Superior, Mr. J. B. Murphy, and four others, having abjured the idolatrous and superstitious tenets of Romanism, and embraced the glorious and saving doctrines of the Reformed Faith, Rome is too cunning to make any attempt to revive the order in that locality.

The associations, which an allusion to Youghal recal to my memory, are painful in the extreme, and harrow up my feelings, filling me with the bitterest sorrow and remorse. When I take a retrospective survey of the time worse than lost in storing my mind with fabulous legends and impious doctrines, and the devoted manner in which I laboured to instil the pioson of human inventions into the minds and hearts of hundreds of the young, I am struck with horror at the

recollection ; and my earnest desire is to embrace every opportunity of undoing the mischief that has been done, and promoting the faith, which I once laboured to destroy. I shall have no greater joy than to hear that those children whom I was the unhappy means of deceiving, have been illuminated from above, and are walking in the truth ; and that the adults, who looked up to me for divine instruction, and received at my hands the poison of asps instead of the bread of life, may also obtain an abundant entrance into the glorious liberty of the children of God ! I may, indeed, say with Paul, “I did it ignorantly in unbelief,” but I “obtained mercy ;” and I earnestly pray that God’s grace may not be bestowed on me in vain !

The Presentation Monks are not near so wealthy as the Christian Brothers, although they are both privileged to make a collection annually in the chapel of the diocese where their respective institutions are established. In addition to the aid they receive in this manner, they also solicit private subscriptions and bequests ; and it is much to be regretted, that professing Protestants, of great respectability, have no hesitation in subscribing to their funds, and becoming enrolled as

the supporters of monkish establishments. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

"It fills, and well it may,
The Christian with astonishment to know
That Protestants can plead the Papal cause;
That men, whose martyr'd ancestry pulled down
That Dagon, should combine to set him up!"

CHAPTER VII.

MONKISH LEGENDS.

"The legendary writings and mystical theology of Metaphrastes, and other contemporary authors of school divinity, engrossed the attention of the studious, and filled the minds of a credulous people with the ridiculous miracles, and fabulous memoirs, of pretended saints,"

MONKS and friars have been, in a great degree, the instrumental cause of all the superstitions which, for so long a period, have disgraced the Christian world; and it is much to be lamented that—in this enlightened age, when literature, art, and science, seem to have attained their highest degree of perfection, when every facility is afforded for the spread of knowledge, and when the blessed volume of inspiration is shedding its benign lustre on the minds of the inhabitants of heathen nations, who were but recently sunk in the depths of barbarism and idolatry—so large a portion of Christendom should be so darkened in their understandings as to become influenced by such lying fables, and

gross impositions, as the Church of Rome deals out to her benighted votaries. The infamous and blasphemous fictions of Metaphrastes and Bollandus, and the lying and foolish legends of the Breviary, are the subjects which she substitutes for the glorious truths of the everlasting Gospel. The constitutions of the abbot Benedict, one of her eminent saints, furnish us with this fact—that after supper the brethren were to assemble, and some one of them was to read aloud from the Collations of Cassian, or the Lives of the Fathers, or some other edifying book ; but not the Pentateuch, nor the other books of the Old Testament, as this famous man was of opinion that it would not be profitable for persons of ordinary understandings to hear them.* Such a mode of infusing into weak minds her deleterious poison is quite

• Mais pourquoi défendre la lecture de ces livres avant complenes ? C'est apparemment parce qu'il s'y rencontre certaines histoires qui peuvent laisser dans l'esprit des impressions qui pourroient revenir et inquieter les Religieux pendant le sommeil. Peut-être, aussi parce que ces histoires des guerres de Josué, des Juges, et des Rois frappent trop vivement l'imagination, et remuent trop les passions. C'est, dit on, pour cette dernière raison, qu' Ulphilas, Evêque des Goths, ne voulut pas traduire en sa langue les Livres des Rois, de peur d'allumer de plus en plus la passion de ces peuples, qui n'étoit déjà que trop grande pour la guerre.—*Calmet*.

in character with a church that will not bear the light, nor allow her doctrines to be brought to the bar of Scripture or reason. She opens wide to the enthusiastic gaze of her votaries the productions of heated imaginations and fertile fancies, replete with all kinds of lying wonders and dangerous deceits, and closes on them the word of life—the Gospel of redeeming grace; and uttering an anathema, from which there lies no appeal, against all who would presume to open its illuminated pages, or judge of its contents—seals it up for ever from their view;* whilst she asserts, in direct opposition to the declaration of its divine Author, that it does not contain all things necessary for salvation, that it is dark and obscure, and not profitable for the people.† We shall now exhibit to the notice of our readers, the poison that is instilled into the minds of the

* Prohibemus etiam, ne libros Veteris Testamenti aut Novi, laici permittantur habere; nisi forte psalterium, vel breviarium pro divinis officiis, aut horas beatæ Mariæ, aliquis ex devotione habere velit. Sed ne præmissos libros habeant in vulgari translato, arctissimè inhibemus —*Concil. Tolosan. P. Gregory IX. an. ch. 1229. Phil. Labbæi et Gab. Cossartii, tom. xi. pars. 1. Lutetiæ Parisiorum, 1671.*

† *Conc. Trid. Sess. iv. Decret. de Can. Scrip. Bellar. de verbo Dei, lib. iv. cap. 3. Ind. libr. prohibet. Regula iv.*

credulous devotees of the Church of Rome, under pretence of administering to them edifying and pious instruction! We subjoin the following account of the estatica of St. Francis from the Roman Breviary :—

“ Francis, a truly faithful servant and minister of Christ, two years before he yielded his soul to heaven, when, on a lofty eminence apart, which is called the mountain of Alvernia, he entered upon the fast of forty days in honour of the archangel Michael, being overspread more abundantly than usual with the sweetness of heavenly contemplation, and being inflamed with a more ardent fire of celestial desires, began to feel more abundantly the gift of divine influences. Whilst, therefore, he was drawn upwards to God by the seraphic ardour of his desires, and was transformed, by the compassionate tenderness of his feelings, before Him, who was pleased of his great love to be crucified, on a certain morning, near the feast of the exaltation of the holy cross, praying on the side of the mountain, he saw, as it were, the appearance of one of the seraphim, having six shining wings like as of fire, to descend from the height of heaven, which, with rapid flight, reaching that part of the air near the man of God, appeared not only as having wings, but



also crucified, having his hands, indeed, and feet extended, and fastened to a cross, but the wings in a wonderful manner so disposed on every side, that he could raise two above his head, and expand two to fly, and with the other two he could veil his whole body, by wrapping them round him. Seeing this, he was greatly amazed, and his mind partook of joy, mixed with grief, and whilst in the gracious aspect of him, so miraculously as well as familiarly appearing to him, he conceived a certain overflowing joy, and the dreadful affixion of the cross which he had beheld, pierced his soul with the sword of sympathising pain.

“He understood, indeed, by his teaching within, who appeared outwardly to him, that although the infirmity of suffering by no means comported with the immortality of the seraphic spirit, nevertheless the vision of this same being had been presented to his own view for the very purpose, that he himself, the friend of Christ, might foreknow that he would be transformed into the express image of Jesus Christ crucified, not by the martyrdom of the flesh, but by the universal fire of his soul. Wherefore the disappearing vision, after the secret of familiar converse, inflamed his mind within with the seraphic ardour of itself, but it marked his flesh without

with a figure like him who was crucified, as though a certain impression, by a seal, followed the previous liquefactive powers of fire; for immediately *the marks of the nails began to be seen in his hands and feet*, with the heads appearing on the lower part of his hands, and on the upper part of his feet, and their points projecting on the opposite side. *His right side, also, was covered with a red wound*, as if pierced with a spear, *which frequently issued forth sacred blood*, besprinkled his coat and his breeches.

“Afterwards, therefore, Francis shone forth a new man, by a new and wonderful miracle; he appeared renowned by a singular privilege, not conceded to past ages, namely, being adorned with sacred stigmas, he descended from the mountain, bringing with him the image of him who was crucified, graven not in tables of stone, by the hand of an artist, but written by the finger of the living God, on fleshly members. Forasmuch as the seraphic man well knew that it was a good thing to conceal the sacrament of the King, conscious of the royal secret, he hid those sacred little marks as much as he could. But because it is God’s property to reveal for his own glory those great things which the Lord himself does, who had impressed privately those little

marks, by the same openly shewed certain miracles, that the secret and wondrous virtue of those stigmas might appear manifest by the distinctness of the marks. Moreover, Pope Benedict the Eleventh was pleased that a matter so wonderful, *and so well attested*, and lauded with peculiar praises and favours in the bulls of popes,* should be celebrated by an anniversary solemnity; which afterwards Pope Paul the Fifth extended to the Universal Church, that the hearts of the faithful might be inflamed to the love of Christ crucified.”†

Francis was considered by his order as a second Christ, and in every respect equal to the divine Founder of the church. This opinion was openly propagated in a large work, entitled, “The Golden Book of the Conformities of the Holy Father St. Francis, with the Life of our Saviour Jesus Christ; written in 1383, by Bartholomew Albizi, a Franciscan monk, of Pisa.‡ In it the author

* *Vide Librum conformit. lib. iii. confor. 31, par. 2, p. 308. Apparet ergo viii. Bullis summorum pontificum scilicet tribus Gregorii IX. tribus Alexand. IV. etc. beat. Francisus stigmatizatus fuit.*

† Rom. Brev. Autumn. Par. p. 423. Lisbon, 1786.

‡ *Lib. aureus, inscript. lib. conform. vite beati ac seraphici patris Francisci ad vitam Jesu Christi Domini nostri, correctus et illustrat. Bononiæ, 1590. Nouveau Dictionnaire Hist. Crit. tom. i. apud. art. Albizi. p. 217.*

salutes Francis with a prayer, fit only to be addressed to God himself; first blasphemously calling him "typical Jesus," and then desiring him to cure the sins, and heal the spiritual maladies of souls, and finally give unto them a place in the kingdom of heaven.* He also enumerates forty points of resemblance between Christ and St. Francis, in which the marks of wounds on his person are included, which were multiplied, A. D. 1651, in a work written by a Spanish monk, to *four thousand*! Even Pierre d'Olive, a native of Serignan, in Lauguedoc, who had acquired a shining reputation for his learning, sanctity, and writings, and one who sharply and openly censured the corruption of the Church of Rome, in his "*Postilla, or Commentary on the Revelations*," partook so much of the extravagancies of the age in which he lived, as to believe that Francis was wholly and entirely transformed into the person of Christ!† The bones of this weak enthusiast were raised by the order of Pope John

* Francisce Jesu typice dux formaq.; minorum, per te Christi mirificè sunt gesta, et donor. Mala pater egregie propelle animorum sedes nobis perpetuas da regni supernorum.—*Ibid.*

† Totum Christo configuratum. *Litera Magistrorum de Postilla Fratris P. Joh. Olivi*, in Baluzii *Miscel.* tom. i. p. 213.

XXII., and publicly burnt with his writings, A. D. 1325.*

With reference to the marks of wounds upon the body of Francis, Mosheim, the ecclesiastical historian, observes :—" That St. Francis had upon his body the marks or impressions of the five wounds of Christ, is not to be doubted, since this fact is proved by a great number of unexceptionable witnesses. But, as he was a most superstitious and fanatical mortal, it is undoubtedly evident, that he imprinted on himself those holy wounds, that he might resemble Christ, and bear about in his body a perpetual memorial of the Redeemer's sufferings. Be that as it may, the Franciscan monks, having found these marks upon the dead body of their founder, took this occasion of making him appear to the world as honoured by heaven above the rest of mortals, and invented, for this purpose, the story of Christ's having miraculously transferred his wounds to him."†

It is related, that " Jane, the venerable sister of Jesus and Mary, of the order of St. Francis, while she was on one occasion meditating on the infant Jesus persecuted by Herod, heard a loud noise.

* *Vide* Raynald, ad. An. 1325, sect. 20.

† *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. iii. p. 336.

as if some one were pursued by armed soldiers, A most beautiful infant, overwhelmed with affliction, and flying from his enemies, instantly appeared, and said to her : ‘ My dear sister Jane, assist and save me ! I am Jesus of Nazareth, and am flying away from sinners, who seek to take away my life, and persecute me with more cruelty than Herod did. Do you save me ! ’ ”*

The following circumstance is recorded of St. Philip Neri, founder of the Congregation of Priests :—“ About the year 1555, when Philip, who had many followers, journeyed to the place where are the baths of Diocletian, he saw standing upon a wall, which had fallen down from age, the devil, in the form of a man ; and when he observed him more closely, he beheld him at one time appear as a youth, and presently afterwards as an old man. Hence discovering the tricks of the devil, he ordered him in the name of Christ to discover himself. Overcome by this, the devil betook himself to flight, and as he departed he filled the place with so offensive a stench, that even the beasts could not tolerate it, and thus made it evident to Philip, and the other spectators, who he was.”†

* Ap. P. Genov. Dol. di Maria. Ligouri's Dis. p. 153.

† Acta Sanctorum Maii., tom. vi. Antverpiæ, 1688. Die Vigesima Sexta Maii.

The following vision is said to have appeared to St. Andrew Salus:—"When it was dark, and Andrew, who was watching about the middle of the night, secretly offered up, in the sanctuary of his heart, prayers and vows to God and the blessed martyr, a devil suddenly came to him, surrounded with many other devils, and bearing in his hand an axe; whilst of the other devils some were furnished with daggers, others with clubs, some with swords and lances, others with ropes, and all fought under that dragon or serpent who was the commander, about whom they frequently assembled to the dismay of the blessed Andrew. Attended, therefore, with these companions, and raising a loud shout, that most wicked devil, who assumed the form of an Æthiop, for such he appeared, rushed upon the saint with great fury, as if about to strike him with the axe which he held in his hand. But the blessed youth raising his hands to the Lord, with many tears, and preferring the following petition, '*Sancte Joannes theologe, opitulare mihi!*' 'O holy John, the theologian, succour me!' immediately it thundered on high, and there were voices, as if proceeding from a crowd. And behold an old man appeared, remarkable by the greatness of his body and eyes, and rather bald, with his face shining above the sun,

surrounded with a great multitude, to whom he said in an angry tone, 'Shut the doors, for no one shall escape from our hands.' And all the Moors being thus shut in, one of them whispered in the ear of his companions, '*Væ nobis, quia Joannes ille, ut vehemens imprimis est, gravissima nobis tormenta infliget.*' 'Woe to us, for that John, who is a most violent fellow, will inflict upon us the most acute torments.' But that venerable old man, when at his command his companions had taken off the chain from the blessed Andrew's neck, and had given it to him, going to the outer door, stood there, and ordered them to bring to him the Moors, one by one. And he ordered the first to be extended on the ground, and he tripled the blessed Andrew's chain, and thus inflicted nearly one hundred blows upon the wretch, who cried out, after the fashion of a man, 'Mercy, mercy, mercy!' When he had done this, he ordered another to be extended, who was treated precisely in the same manner. Meanwhile the blessed Andrew, when he heard this pitiable cry for mercy, could not help laughing * * But when they were dismissed thus beaten, the companions of John cried out, saying to each of them, 'Depart and tell those things, if you will, to your father Satan.' **

* *Ibid.* Collarium ad Diem 28. Maii. Vita S. Andreæ Salî.

- "In the Cistercian Chronicles (die 24 Nov.) it is related that, in passing through a wood, a certain monk of Brabante, who was travelling on Christmas night, heard a noise which resembled the groans of a new-born infant. He went to the place from which the cries proceeded, and saw a beautiful babe in the midst of the snow, trembling with cold and bathed in tears. Touched with pity, the religious instantly dismounted, and approaching the infant, said—'O, my child! why are you so abandoned in this snow, to weep and die?' The infant answered: 'Alas! how can I but weep when I see myself so deserted by all, and find that no one receives, or takes compassion on me?' After these words the infant disappeared, giving the religious to understand, that by this vision he wished to reprove the ingratitude of men, who, while they see him born in a cave for their sake, leave him to weep without pity for his sufferings.*"

We shall now direct the reader's attention to the abbess Teresa, a canonized Romish saint. In her autobiography, a work stamped with the high approval of the Court of Rome, we are informed that on one occasion, when performing

* St. Ligouri's Dis. and Med. trans. from the Italian, p. 147.

her customary devotions, she was suddenly thrust into hell, the entrance of which she describes to be like that of an oven. Continuing her strange narrative in a mingled strain of the melancholy and the ridiculous, she concludes by affirming, that she endured the most excruciating and inconceivable agony, that after her deliverance, which was not very protracted, her sinews and muscles assumed a contracted position, and that several physicians, who visited her, testified, that she had undergone some extraordinary and supernatural suffering.

We are furnished with another story of an Estatica, which occurred to St. Rita, of Roccha Porrenna Cassia, in Umbria, a nun of the Augustinian order:—"On a certain day, whilst she was more earnestly praying to the image of Christ hanging from the cross, a thorn from the crown of the crucifix was so struck through her forehead, that she suffered an incurable wound till her death, from which, in addition to her keenest sense of pain, a foul corruption issued. From whence, lest it should excite disgust in the sisters, she lived a recluse with God. But in the secular year, being forbidden by Antistita to go to Rome with the other sisters, on account of the deformity of the ulcer, she grew well on a sudden, on wiping

the wound, which, however, on her return home, broke out again. After some years, being attacked with heavy sickness, she bore it most patiently for four years, at which time a blooming rose from a small garden, in a very rough winter, and two very fresh figs, were brought to her. Now being near her death, she heard Christ the Lord, together with the blessed Virgin, calling her to the kingdom of heaven; and so, having received all the sacraments of the church, she slept in the Lord, on the eleventh of the kalends of June, in the year after the birth of Christ, 1443. Her body, to this day uncorrupted, fragrant with the sweetest odour, is piously worshipped. Urban VIII. added her to the number of the saints, conspicuous by her miracles before and after her death.”*

I do not hesitate to assert, that were it not for the prompt and resolute exposure of the base and impious frauds lately carried on in the vicinity of Youghal, with the privity, and under the sanction, of Priest Foley, we should have, by this time, some noted personage or another, claiming saintship for those Magdalen impostors. The diabolical imposition of this Estatica is exposed in a little work written by the respected rector of

* Rom. Brev. Vern. Par. p. 735. Lisb. 1786.

that town, the Rev. John Aldworth.* It is worthy of notice that a Roman Catholic gentleman, who travelled from London to Youghal, in order to have ocular demonstration of the farce that was acting at the College of St. Mary, returned to London disgusted with the scene he witnessed.

The following is an extract from the life of St. Walthen, abbot:—"When upon a certain occasion the saint stood praying before the great altar, with his eyes and hands raised to heaven, the evil spirit transfigured himself into many shapes: he first ran about the pavement in the form of a mouse, playing many antics; afterwards in the shape of a grunting pig; afterwards in the form of a black dog, barking; afterwards of a howling wolf; and lastly, of a roaring, long-horned bull.

"But the saint caused all these illusory forms to vanish, by making the sign of the cross. At last, that spirit, who has a thousand artifices, and who, in a thousand ways, endeavours to disturb quiet hearts, exhibited himself in the form of a great soldier in armour, sitting upon the back of a horrible horse with a whale's hide, which

* The Estatica of Youghal compared with the wonders of the Tyrol, in a Letter to the Right Hon. the Earl of Shrewsbury.

emitted fire and smoke from its nostrils and mouth, and shook his lance against the man, who was praying. The saint jumping up as fast as he could by the impulse of the Spirit, and going to the altar, reverently took up the ivory pix,* which contained the holy body of the Lord, and signing himself with it, and running like a second David against the infernal Goliath, and inventing a new name for him, under the dictation of the Spirit, said, 'Behold, O execrable mouse, O terrible soldier, thou satellite of Satan, thy Judge is about to send thee into hell; wait for him if thou darest!' Overcome and confused by this speech, the infernal horseman disappeared.†

We are informed that, on one occasion, when St. Dominic was "sitting at a window with many of the brethren, and was preaching to" the sisterhood, the enemy of mankind, in the likeness of a sparrow, flying over the sisters in the air, but so near the ground that you might lay hold of him, interrupted the preaching, which when the saint perceived, he said to sister Maximilla, 'Rise and lay hold of him, and bring him to me.' She rising took him without any difficulty, and gave

* The vessel in which the Popish wafer is kept.

† Acta Sanctorum. Vita S. Waltheri Abbatis. Dei Tertia Augusti, tom. i. p. 264.

him through the window to the holy man. But he began hastily to pluck his feathers off, saying, 'O thou enemy! O thou enemy!' And when he had plucked all his feathers off, the devil meanwhile crying out lamentably, and all of those present laughing at him, Dominic cast him out, saying, 'Depart, thou enemy of the human race, fly now, if thou canst!'

"It happened there also, that this man of God, who had watched till the middle of the night in prayer, departing from the church, wrote by candlelight, sitting at the head of his dormitory. And behold the devil appearing in the form of a monkey, began strutting about before him, making ridiculous gestures with grimaces. Then the saint beckoned to him to stand still, giving him a lighted candle to hold before him; and he, although he held it, continued to make his grimaces. Meanwhile the candle was finished, and began to burn the monkey's fingers, and he began to lament as if tortured by the flame, whereas he who burns in the flames of hell, ought not to fear a bodily flame. But the saint beckoned to him to stand still. Why should I say more? He stood there until the whole of his forefinger was burnt down to the socket, crying out more and more loudly from the torture. Thus the man of God, strong

in faith, having taken him in who sought to impose upon him, gave him a sharp blow with a cane, which he always carried with him, saying, 'Depart, thou wicked man;' and the blow sounded as if he had struck a dry bladder full of wind. Upon this, casting himself against the nearest wall, he disappeared, leaving behind him a stench, which discovered who he was. Truly this man is to be extolled among the angelic powers, who so powerfully confounds and reproves diabolical wickedness.

"Sister Cæcilia, a girl aged seventeen, first received the habit of the order from the hand of the holy father Dominic. She beheld with her eyes, and heard with her ears, and faithfully narrated the things which are related."*

In a work entitled "Devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, translated from the French, and revised by the Rev. Joseph Joy Deane, Prebendary of St. Bridget's Seminary, Blanchardstown,"† we discover the following extracts from the autobiography of the celebrated abbess, Mother Marguerite Maria Alacoque, a religious of the Visitation order,

* Acta Ampliora S. Dominici Confessoris. Die quartâ Augusti. c. 13.

† Dublin: Richard Grace, 1841.

who, we are informed, died in the odour of sanctity in the monastery of Paroi-le-monial, in Charalois, A.D. 1690 :—

“ While prostrate before the blessed sacrament, during the octave of the feast, I received from my Saviour extraordinary marks of his love : animated with a desire of making some return, and of repaying love with love, he disclosed to me his most sacred heart, saying : ‘ Behold this heart which has loved man to such excess that it has exhausted and consumed itself to testify to him its love : you cannot give me stronger proof of yours than by carrying into effect what I have so often required to be done. Therefore, I require of thee, that the first Friday after the octave of the feast of the blessed sacrament be particularly dedicated to honour my heart, in making reparation to it by an act of atonement, and going to communion on that day, in order to repair the indignities which the blessed sacrament may have received during the time it has been exposed on the altars ; and I promise thee that my heart shall be dilated to impart abundantly the influence of its divine love to those who shall render this honour, or cause it to be rendered, to my heart !”

In another part of the work it is stated :—
“ That our Lord revealed to this venerable

religious, that he wished that the *picture* of his *heart* should be honoured, and that he would communicate abundantly his graces where it would be revered, and on those who would honour it !”

And in a preceding part, one Lanspergius, a Carthusian monk, termed by the author, “celebrated and pious,” speaks thus of the picture :—“I would recommend you to put in such places as you frequently pass, some pious picture of this adorable heart, the sight of which may remind you frequently to renew your devout exercises in its honour. You may, even, as you feel interiorly affected, kiss tenderly this picture, *with the same devotion that you would the very heart of Jesus Christ !*”

Doubtless, such extracts, abounding with impiety, must be painful in the extreme to all who entertain pure sentiments of religion, and are influenced by love for the Redeemer, who is so blasphemously insulted under the false pretext of rendering him homage and adoration, and made to sanction the grossest species of idolatry ! O, false, antichristian Church of Rome ! O, mystical, Babylon ! thy crimes have already reached unto the portals of the highest heavens ; and tremble ! for the bitter vial of the wrath and indignation of God’s justice

is impending; and, at a moment when you shall least expect it, will be poured out upon thy guilty head! "Your plagues shall come in one day; death, and mourning, and famine, and you shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth you!"*

I cannot more appropriately bring the present chapter to a close, than by inserting a brief extract from the writings of one who had been a Romish priest. Adverting to monkish institutions and legends, he observes:—"The doctrine of pretended miracles, extraordinary visions, saints, relics, &c., have had a wonderful effect in bestowing an assumed excellence and sanctity on the Romish Church. Now, of all places, convents are best adapted for such impositions and priest-craft. If brother Bonaventure or father Anthony happened to die, although during their whole life they behaved like vagabonds, still every friar in the community would swear black was white in favour of his canonized brother, and afterwards write volumes of lies on the heroic exploits, spiritual triumphs, nocturnal watchings, fasting and discipline, by which this man of God subdued the carnal mind, and in despite of the

* Revel. xviii. 8.

devil, the world, and the flesh, bore off the meritorious palm of victory. The truth of this assertion is fully illustrated in every page of the Romish Breviary. Almost every saint commemorated in that compilation, belonged to some order of monks or friars; and, indeed, the contests for superiority amongst the several orders, have been frequently carried to such excess, as to throw whole communities into confusion. I have never been inclined to go to the trouble of ascertaining by a calculation which of them all can boast of the greatest number, but I have been assured by a jolly old Capuchin, who could repeat the Breviary from beginning to end, but knew nothing else, that the Franciscans, in which he was included, mustered by far the greatest body; a circumstance which, at the same time, does them very little credit. We know, however, that Metaphrastes, the inventor of this fictitious biography, was determined, for the better circulation of his work, to give full scope to his imagination, and excite the astonishment of his readers with a detail of the extraordinary wonders and miracles of his several saints, and that it was, in those days, a prevailing custom in the monasteries to propose the life of some particular sanctified brother, as a theme or subject of composition, with a premium

bestowed on the person who would, by a description of the most austere penances and miraculous actions, exalt his hero to the highest pinnacle of excellence and perfection. * * * It is extraordinary, that men who call themselves Christians, and the teachers of a Christian gospel, should in any shape countenance the circulation of such monstrous fables !”*

* Papal Impositions, &c., by the Rev. M. Brennan, p. 24.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PERNICIOUS TENDENCY OF MONACHISM, VIEWED IN A MORAL, PHYSICAL, AND SCRIPTURAL LIGHT.

“Solitariness is the sly enemy that doth most separate a man from well-doing.”

THE opinion of all, who do not take a contracted view of the subject, concurs with the Divine record, that “it is not good for man to be alone,” and that monkish indolence and solitude are incompatible with the purposes, for which man, as a social being, was originally created. The authority of interested churchmen and zealous bigots weighs not a feather in the scale, when put in juxta-position with the words of Him, whose wisdom is infinite, whose mercy is unbounded, and the revelation of whose will must for ever put to silence the uninspired dogmas of Popes, Councils, and Fathers. The monastic life is a state of the greatest bondage, as it binds its weighty yoke both upon the minds and bodies of its victims;

and, by the authoritative injunction of a blind submission to the whims of a superior, renders the exercise of thought and reason both superfluous and criminal. Rational and innocent amusements are prohibited, as inconsistent with a religious profession; and, therefore, the youngest postulant is compelled to assume the sour and studied gravity of the oldest professed monk in the community. Hence arise, from undue restraint, incalculable moral, as well as physical evils; and some there are who entered those retreats virtuous and moral, who afterwards abandoned them with feelings of disgust, and exhibited, by their immoral practices in after life, the fearful consequences of imposing too great a burthen upon the young, and denying them the means of rational enjoyment, so consistent both with Scripture and common sense! Alluding to the evils resulting from the prohibition of innocent amusements, an eminent writer observes:—

“ People should be guarded against temptation to unlawful pleasures by furnishing them with the means of innocent ones. In every community there should be pleasures, relaxations, and means of agreeable excitement; for, if *innocent* ones be not furnished, resort will be had to *criminal*. Man was made to enjoy as well as to labour, and

the state of society should be adapted to this principle of human nature." *

Our great reformer, Martin Luther, thus writes :—

"What I here say from St. Paul's words, I have learned by experience, my own, and that of others, in the monastery. I have seen many, who, with the utmost diligence and scrupulosity, have omitted nothing which might pacify conscience ; have worn hair-cloth, fasted, prayed, afflicted and exhausted their bodies by various severities ; so that, even if they had been made of iron, they must, at length, have been destroyed. Yet the more they laboured, the more fearful they became ! and, especially as the hour of death drew nigh, they were so full of trepidation, that I have seen many murderers, condemned for their crimes, meet death with more confidence than these persons, who had lived so strictly." †

Again : Speaking from personal experience, the same writer observes :—

"When I was a monk, I endeavoured, as much as possible, to live after the strait rule of my own order ; I was wont to confess myself with great devotion, and to reckon up all my sins, being

* Dr. Channing.

† Comment. on Galatians.

always very contrite before, and I returned to confession very often, and thoroughly performed the penance that was enjoined unto me : yet for all this my conscience could never be fully certified, but was always in doubt, and said, this or that, thou hast not done rightly : thou wast not contrite and sorrowful enough : this sin thou didst omit in thy confession, and so forth. Therefore, the more I went about to help my weak, wavering, and afflicted conscience by men's traditions, the more weak, and doubtful, and the more afflicted I was. And thus, the more I observed men's traditions the more I transgressed them, and in seeking after righteousness, by mine order, I could never attain unto it." *

It would be out of the power of language to deprecate, in terms sufficiently strong, the monastic system ; so pernicious to society, so injurious, morally and physically, to those who embrace such a state, and so dishonouring to the Majesty of heaven ! Conceive the position of a young person, with spirits buoyant and light, inclosed within the walls, and enveloped in the solitariness of a cloister—never again to mingle with the fond and endearing companions of early life—but to

* Preservative against Popery, by the Rev. Blanco White, p. 95.

glide down the current of life, forgotten and unknown. Imagination shudders at the thought! 'What! to forsake home, kindred, friends, and oftentimes country, and to become isolated from the common family of mankind! Can this be anything but fanaticism? Can this be religion? Can this be pleasing to the Creator, who did not give us existence for the purpose of burying ourselves in cloisters, and thereby becoming unprofitable to our fellow-mortals, and dead in a civil point of view? * Certainly not! The wisdom of heaven never designed or contemplated such a scheme. For, as a learned writer observes, "A wise and intelligent author must propose some end in the production of things; but the end, whatever it was, could never be promoted by indolence and sloth. Non-activity is the next to non-existence, and could no more answer any useful purpose. A production of stupid, unmoving, passive beings, could be no other than a general chaos, which could prove of no farther utility than as afford-

* The monastic profession is a kind of civil death, which, in all worldly matters, has the same effect with the natural death. The Council of Trent has fixed sixteen years for the age at which a person may be admitted into the monastic life.—*Ency. Britan.* art. *Monastery.*

ing matter for future motion, harmony, and order." *

It is bad enough when this system deludes the young enthusiast, who embraces, with avidity, a state wherein he imagines perfect holiness and angelic purity can be attained. But, is it not horrifying to think, that individuals, whose inclinations and feelings revolt at, and are entirely adverse to, such a retreat, should be compelled, as well by intimidation as entreaty, to adopt such a mode of life. I have witnessed an instance of this cruelty; and cruelty is by far too mild a term for such a barbarous mode of driving human beings to become saints, by immuring them in monkish solitude.]

There was a Roman Catholic curate, with whom I was acquainted, who had a sister—a fine, sprightly young woman—residing with him. However, in consequence of slender pecuniary resources, he determined on giving up his dwelling-house, and living with the parish priest. His first step, therefore, was to compel his sister to enter a community of inclosed nuns. Notwithstanding her repeated refusals and entreaties, and the interposition of a younger brother, who had just returned from Maynooth College for the

* Dodwell.

vacation, she was compelled, though in the bitterness of grief, to comply with her brother's unnatural demand! Even a very short time previous to her departure, she declared to me how painful it was to her feelings, and how deeply it wounded her heart, to be obliged to become a nun contrary to her natural inclinations. The young lady still remains in her gloomy cloister, having made perpetual vows, and received the black veil—true emblem of the sorrow that, in all probability, consumes, like a canker, the heart of her who wears it! This is not a solitary instance of the barbarity exercised in order to compel persons to become secluded from the world; although many who are ignorant of the system, foolishly imagine that the act is a voluntary one. “Thus in Rome, even the signification of words is changed; weakness, which yields to force, is termed *docility*, and the *yes*, extorted by violence, is called *consent*!”*

The following affecting narrative is related by the Rev. Blanco White:—

“The eldest daughter of a family intimately acquainted with mine, was brought up in the convent of Saint Agnes, at Seville, under the care of her mother's sister, the abbess of that female

* R. Ciocci, late a Benedictine and Cistercian Monk in Rome.

community. The circumstances of the whole transaction were so public at Seville, and the subsequent judicial proceedings have given them such notoriety, that I do not feel bound to conceal names. Maria Francisca Barreiro, the unfortunate subject of this account, grew up a lively and interesting girl, in the convent; while a younger sister enjoyed the advantages of an education at home. The mother formed an early design of devoting her eldest daughter to religion, in order to give her less attractive favourite a better chance of getting a husband. The distant and harsh manner with which she constantly treated Maria Francisca, attached the unhappy girl to her aunt by the ties of the most ardent affection. The time, however, arrived when it was necessary that she should either leave her, and endure the consequences of her mother's aversion at home, or take the vows, and thus close the gates of the convent upon herself for ever. She preferred the latter course; and came out to pay the last visit to her friends. I met her, almost daily, at the house of one of her relations; where her words and manner soon convinced me that she was a victim of her mother's designing and unfeeling disposition. The father was an excellent man, though timid and undecided. He feared his wife,

and was in awe of the monks; who, as usual, were extremely anxious to increase the number of their female prisoners. Though I was aware of the danger which a man incurs in Spain, who tries to dissuade a young woman from being a nun, humanity impelled me to speak seriously to the father, entreating him not to expose a beloved child to spend her life in hopeless regret for lost liberty. He was greatly moved by my reasons; but the impression I made was soon obliterated. The day for Maria Francisca's taking the veil was at length fixed; and though I had a most pressing invitation to be present at the ceremony, I determined not to see the wretched victim at the altar. On the preceding day, I was called from my stall at the Royal Chapel, to the confessional. A lady, quite covered by her black veil, was kneeling at the grate through which females speak to the confessor. As soon as I took my seat, the well-known voice of Maria Francisca made me start with surprise. Bathed in tears, and scarcely able to speak without betraying her state to the people who knelt near the confessional box, by the sobs which interrupted her words, she told me she wished only to unburden her heart to me before she shut herself up for life. Assistance, she assured me, she would not receive; for rather

than live with her mother, and endure the obloquy to which her swerving from her determination would expose her, she would risk the salvation of her soul! All my remonstrances were in vain. I offered to obtain the protection of the archbishop, and thereby to extricate her from the difficulties in which she was involved. She declined my offer, and appeared as resolute as she was wretched. The next morning she took the veil, and professed at the end of the following year. Her good aunt died soon after; and the nuns, who had allured her into the convent by their caresses, when they perceived that she was not able to disguise her misery, and feared that the existence of a reluctant nun might, by her means, transpire, became her daily tormentors.

“After an absence of three years from Seville, I found that Maria Francisca had openly declared her aversion to a state, from which nothing but death could save her. She often changed her confessors, expecting comfort from their advice. At last she found a friend in one of the companions of my youth; a man whose benevolence surpasses even the bright genius with which nature has gifted him: though neither has been able to exempt him from the evils to which Spaniards seem to be fated in proportion to their worth. He

became her confessor, and in that capacity, spoke to her daily. But what could he do against the inflexible tyranny in whose grasp she languished ?

“ About this time the approach of Napoleon’s army threw the town into a general consternation, and the convents were opened to such of the nuns as wished to fly. Maria Francisca, whose parents were absent, put herself under the protection of a young prebendary of the cathedral, and by his means reached Cadiz, where I saw her, on my way to England. I shall never forget the anguish with which, after a long conversation, wherein she disclosed to me the whole extent of her wretchedness, she exclaimed, ‘ *There is no hope for me !* ’ and fell into convulsions.

“ The liberty of Spain from the French invaders was the signal for the fresh confinement of this helpless young woman to her former prison. Here she attempted to put an end to her sufferings by throwing herself into a deep well, but was taken out alive. Her mother was now dead, and her friends instituted a suit of *nullity of profession*, before the ecclesiastical court. But the laws of the Council of Trent were positive; and she was cast in the trial. Her despair, however, exhausted the little strength which her protracted sufferings had left her, and the unhappy

Maria Francisca died soon after, having scarcely reached her twenty-fifth year.”*

Further, the system of monachism is pernicious in a *physical* sense.

Would that I could illustrate my position by opening the doors of the monastic and conventual cells, and presenting to the reader's view the sad and solitary inhabitants. How would the blanched, the pale, and the extended visage, affect and draw forth the tenderest feelings of compassion! *Here* would be observed the young man, whose health is gradually and imperceptibly declining, evidently the victim of pining cares and ceaseless grief, who, were he in the possession of true and correct notions of Revealed truth, would, probably, be both an ornament and a blessing to society. And *there*, the delicate and tender maiden, who, ere two summers' suns had passed over her head, was

“ Like the lily,
That once was mistress of the field, and flourished,”

whose eyes sparkled with delight, and upon whose countenance was depicted health and serenity of mind; now, alas! become the victim, the unhappy victim, of a dreadful superstition! No more does

* Evidence against Catholicism.

the crimson cheek and beaming eye betoken a mind at ease, and a healthy frame. No : they are changed now. Nothing now presents itself but the pale, emaciated visage, indicating much mental and bodily suffering. And although there may be discerned in some a cheerfulness of manner ; it is but an affectation of the reality ; for I have not the slightest hesitation in affirming, that these poor creatures are actually obliged to conceal the emotions of their hearts, by appearing to possess great joy and peace, and assuming a cheerful and pleasing deportment—which truly verifies the assertion, that

“Who trust appearances oft’ judge amiss,
For outward show is but the mask of bliss.”

If the monastic profession was really a state calculated to afford peace and happiness to those who embrace it, there would be ample opportunity for observing its salutary influences. But it is not ; and, therefore, the monastics are required by rule to *assume* what any one, who has had the least experience of that mode of life, well knows is not consistent with the real feelings of the mind.

In drawing this picture, it was not at all necessary to heighten it by too lively a colouring ;

if there be any fault, it is, that the tints have not been sufficiently bright; for none but those who have been behind the scenes can tell what "weight of woe" these poor solitaries feel—

"What ages of what agonies may low'r
O'er one bruised human heart, in one brief hour,"

are particularly their lot to feel, with all the intenseness of reality. We have an instance of this in the writings of Cassian, where he describes, from personal experience, the "*ascedia*, or listlessness of mind and body, to which such persons were exposed, when they sighed to find themselves alone." Even I have known a person of long standing in a monastic life, who, when his triennial vows had expired, thus expressed himself:—"O, how sweet is liberty!" Ah, I fear that many who are bound to their solitary cloisters, give, but in vain, a similar ejaculation, and pine beneath the blighting influence of corroding care.—

" 'Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow!"

That such baneful influences on the mind must, as a natural consequence, produce physical debility

and infirmity, hear what a celebrated writer says on the subject:—

“ Nothing is more clearly settled by experience, than that grief acts as a slow poison, not only in the immediate infliction of pain, but in gradually impairing the powers of life, and in subtracting from the sum of our days. I am confident that the far greater portion of human suffering is of our own procuring—the result of ignorance and mistaken views.”*

Another writer, treating of this subject, remarks:—“ No one can imagine what a vast number of diseases, not only functional, but organic, arise simply from unpleasant passions of the mind.”†

And our reformer, Martin Luther, after describing the melancholy and dejection to which he, when a monk, was subject, observes:—“ Solitude and melancholy are poison. They are deadly to all; but above all, to the young !”

There is no truth so self-evident, no proposition so axiomatic, as that the monastic system has an especial tendency to vitiate and debase the intellectual powers, and to materially injure the

* Mr. Draper.

† Lectures of Dr. John Elliotson, F.R.S.

physical organs of man. The mind of the unhappy votary of such a system must naturally become affected, when its designs, thoughts, and affections, are continually thwarted and suppressed; and, accordingly we find, that in the sixth century, an hospital was founded at Jerusalem for such monks as were deprived of their reason. I have known some, and have been intimately acquainted with others, who entered, in rude health, within the walls of a monastic inclosure, but in a very short time began rapidly to decline, from the bad effects of a destructive system of discipline. For my own part, I yet feel the pernicious consequences of a monastic life.

It is quite rational to suppose, that they who, by reason of the profession they have made, are necessarily obliged to regard all natural affection as criminal, can possess little, if indeed any, sentiments of love or sympathy for those with whom they become associated, who are actual strangers, and who differ so widely from each other, in early prejudices, education, and deportment. I am in the possession of various circumstances which bear me out in these remarks, but shall content myself by merely relating a few of them.

On particular occasions monks have their "gala

days," or festivities, when the ordinary discipline of the monastery is suspended, and when they indulge, for a time, in the pleasures of the table. On one of these occasions of rejoicing, there happened to be in the house a professed monk who was suffering from a painful disease, and in a state of mental aberration, consequent upon the arduous nature of his monastic duties, as he himself has informed me. But amidst all the joviality and sprightliness evinced in the refectory, the agonizing groans of the suffering brother, issuing from his solitary cell, would reverberate, with thrilling sound, around the festive board; yet callous and adamant hearts could not be induced to put off good cheer, but were content to observe the worldly maxim, "eat, drink, and be merry," heedless of the miseries of a suffering brother. They may, indeed, give expression, now and again, to a word of sympathy, and an exclamation of "Poor fellow!" may be extorted from them; but groans calculated to rend the heart, and call forth tears of compassion from the most obdurate and unfeeling, were not sufficient to force the goblet from their lips, or to give even a sorrowful expression to a single countenance present. Such is a faithful picture of monkish brotherly affection!

I have also known a novice to be left without

attendance or nourishment, for several hours together, although he was languishing upon the bed of sickness, and exhausted from the loss of blood occasioned by the repeated application of leeches. His disease, too, was of that peculiar nature—brought on by the state of life he had adopted—that it was likely to terminate in results horrifying to contemplate. After a lapse of many hours, the deputy superior entered his apartment, and, with cold unconcern, observed : “ O brother ! I believe we have forgotten to send you refreshment to-day ! ” I was present on the occasion, and therefore am positive as to the circumstance. It is no uncommon practice for the novices in monastic houses to be dealt with in this manner ; and I am firmly persuaded that some have been hurried into eternity by treatment almost unknown to brutal or savage life.

I was residing in the same monastery with a young man, who, from long study and strict discipline, became so enervated in body, that he used repeatedly to fall into a faint in the choir during the recital of the Office. Notwithstanding his delicate constitution, he was obliged to rise, during the winter season, at the early hour of five o'clock in the morning, in common with the other monks ; and was finally, sent home to his

friends, lest he might be an incumbrance to the establishment, after having been connected with them for a few years, and exhausting his best energies in supporting their cause. I have conversed with him a few times since his removal from the monastery, and am happy to find that he is now in the possession of Gospel truth, and has seceded from the ranks of the Apostacy! May God grant that many others, who are now buried in cloistered solitude, may imitate his example, and “go and do likewise!”

The following circumstances are narrated by Raffaele Ciocchi, formerly a Benedictine and Cistercian monk in Rome, but now preaching to hundreds of Italians in London, who crowd to hear him speak of his happy deliverance from Papal bondage, and the blessed tidings contained in the Gospel of Christ, unmixed with Papal novelties. He observes:—

“I was, as had been announced to me, shut up for fifteen days in solitude in my room, in order that I might devote myself entirely to religious exercises. After ten days of rigorous confinement—for even my food was brought to my chamber—I became ill—my feet swelled—I was oppressed with nausea, and constant pain in the head—if I attempted to walk, after taking a few turns, I grew

dizzy, and was compelled to throw myself upon the bed; and it frequently happened, that being unable to reach it, I fell fainting to the ground, but no one came to my assistance. These indispositions were, no doubt, the effect of want of light, and air, and exercise.”*

He further remarks:—

“I became acquainted with Dr. Riccardi, a most excellent man, who was unremitting in his attention towards me during the whole of my lingering illness, and of whom I now speak with warm feelings of gratitude. To him I opened the sorrows of my heart, and spoke to him unreservedly of my aversion to the monastic state. He sympathized in my feelings, and, during our conversation one day, observed:—“I have attended in this monastery for twenty years, and also in many other religious houses, and in all I discover youths who, like you, have been lamentably deceived; I hear the same complaints, I am called upon to cure the same disease, and oh! in how many instances have I known it to prove fatal!”†

He again observes:—“Towards the middle of the second year, I was one evening after supper seized with frightful spasms in the stomach. A

* Narrative by R. Ciocci, p. 52.

† Ibid, pp. 55, 56.

burning heat in the chest and throat, which kept rapidly increasing, led me to suspect the cause of this sudden illness. In a short time I became of a livid colour, and foamed at the mouth. On seeing around me the monks, who had hastened to my cries, I turned towards them, exclaiming, 'You have your revenge! Death will soon terminate my misery; but I esteem you less cruel in treating me thus, than in having sacrificed me by deception!' None of the remedies administered afforded me the slightest relief. All my companions were affected to tears at the sight of my sufferings. 'My mother, my mother!' I exclaimed, 'let me, I entreat you, see her once again before I die, * * * and my father, my brothers, my sisters, let me embrace them all.' The most sympathizing of those around me strove, by every means in their power, to calm and console me; seeing that the paroxysms increased, they became alarmed for my reason, and fearing lest in an agony of despair I might attempt my own life, they removed from my room every object which could be made use of for that purpose! But, alas! other torments awaited me. The master asked if I would confess, and pressed it upon me as a duty. I replied, that my faults were known to God, and before him I confessed my nothing-

ness, my sinfulness, but not to man. Instantly I heard a murmur of horror; some exclaimed, 'blasphemy!' others 'heresy, heresy!' and many, 'poor fellow, his sufferings have deprived him of his senses!' The superior thought it expedient to represent that I was possessed by a legion of demons. No sooner was this opinion expressed than the most superstitious ran in haste to the church, and returned loaded with Romish merchandize, *the vase of holy water, Agnus Dei, blessed chaplet in articulo mortis, images, relics*. One sprinkled me on one side, another on the other. Some presented me with images, others placed relics on my forehead, and by the superior I was 'exorcised.' The greater their exertions to grapple with the evil one, the stronger were the evidences of 'possession.'

"Of all the relics presented to me, the one they looked upon with most faith was that of St. Peter the martyr. Although I had not entirely rejected the adoration of saints, St. Peter of Verona, called the martyr, I especially abhorred. This saint, the finest fruit of the Dominican tree, was an inquisitor, who, for having subjected a province to fire and sword, pretending to teach the way to heaven by the light of funereal piles, fell a victim to the just vengeance of a

persecuted people. I never had entertained the slightest sympathy for him, and now, after having studied the Gospel, how could I believe that it was in the power of a pope to make a homicide enter heaven, when St. Paul, in the name of God, tells us, 'that murderers shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.' The pope pretends that this power is included in the '*sana totum quodcunque ligaveris.*' Imagine with what feelings I must have beheld the bones of this blood-thirsty bigot offered to me as something celestial. With all my force I thrust aside the hand of the superior, who presented the relic. He insisted upon my kissing it, esteeming it the most efficacious means whereby to chase the demon of blasphemy, which he said he perceived on my lips—the saint having been so zealous an exterminator of heresy.

“Whilst these things were going on, the physician arrived. His countenance was new to me. They told me that in consequence of the urgency of the case, they had called in a doctor of the neighbourhood. He gave me a glass of medicine, which he had brought with him, and I swallowed it with hope. A few minutes after, instead of being relieved, my pains became more intolerable, and the heat in my throat increased. I then insisted on their summoning the ordinary

physician, who was, I knew, my friend. Dr. Riccardi came. Having inquired into the nature of the attack, he took from the table the phial that had contained the medicine I had swallowed, and having examined the few remaining drops, he shuddered, and with a mysterious and significant ‘Ah!’ threw it out of the window, quickly preparing for me another medicine, which I drank in his presence. He then left, and a violent sickness brought me the wished-for relief. After three hours he returned, and ordered that I should be placed in a hot bath, and from thence conveyed to a warm bed. This induced perspiration, which completed the happy change that the medicine had already produced; and, contrary to the expectations of my persecutors, I escaped from the jaws of death.”*

Again, illustrating by sad examples, the physical evils resulting from a monastic life, he goes on to say:—

“The monk Stramucci was sent to the monastery of San Severino in the marshes, where, owing to the insalubrity of the situation, or from some other cause, in the course of a few months, he was from a robust man reduced to a skeleton. D. Andrea Gigli, curate in the monastery of

* Ibid, pp. 78, 82.

Chiaravalle, was called to Rome. He was then in the enjoyment of excellent health, but in a short time his appearance was strangely altered; and after gradually sinking for two months, he was one morning found in his bed a corpse. We were in the same college, and I was an eye-witness to the fact. D. Eugenio Ghioni remained in Rome; but after four months he also sunk into his tomb at the age of thirty-one. D. Mariano Gabrielli, who was in the flower of youth, was, in the same manner, gradually declining for six months, and then, like the former one, died of what is called consumption. The abbot Bucciarelli, a man of herculean stature, slept with his fathers after an illness of only three days. The Abbot Barti, was, after two months, attacked by a slow fever, and expired after ten days' illness. D. A. Balderii, at the expiration of thirty-four days, was seized with violent spasms and inflammation, and went to rejoin in heaven those martyrs who had preceded him.*

Finally, the monastic system is irreconcilable with the general tenor of Scripture.

Now I would inquire of its supporters, in what part of the sacred writings can be discovered even a solitary passage, warranting rational beings to

* Ibid. pp. 70, 71.

bury themselves in the solitude of a cloister—to hold little or no social intercourse with their fellow-mortals, on pretence of superior sanctity and virtue—and, by a vow of celibacy, to prohibit themselves from entering into a matrimonial engagement? Where can they find the Divine testimony affording even a shadow of authority, that man can render himself justified in the sight of his Maker; and that he can weave a robe of his own righteousness, by his devotions and penitential exercises, nowever multiplied and self-denying they may be? On the contrary, our blessed Lord, in his sermon on the mount, addressing his beloved disciples, says—“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid;” and, by way of illustration, remarks: “Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.” Then he concludes with this very practical application of the allegory: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”* They were not directed, in order to guard their virtue, or with a view of avoiding worldly temptations, to live apart and isolated from the common family

* Matt. v. 14-16.

of mankind—to build for themselves peculiar dwellings—to hold no communion with unbelievers—and to let their good actions, emanating from the faith which they professed, and springing forth like mellow fruit from a well-nurtured tree, be visible and contribute solely to the edification of each other! Nothing could be more opposed to the designs of Him, whose mission was to “call sinners to repentance”—to restore the spiritually infirm—and “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Neither did the blessed apostles, who faithfully executed the high commission entrusted to them, inculcate, support, or countenance any such proceedings. They walked in the sacred footsteps of their blessed Lord and Master—they were instant, in proclaiming, “in season and out of season,” the blessed, saving Gospel of redeeming mercy—“without money and without price” they invited, nay, conjured all who felt the need of its enriching influence, to come and buy—they held out no allurements by which sinners could, with impunity, indulge in their iniquities—they exhibited no vain refuges to save—but utterly repudiated anything and everything that would have the tendency of withholding the guilty from the Saviour—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” was the only, yet powerful, response

which they gave to appease each troubled, contrite, sin-condemned soul, oppressed with sin's destructive malady, when making the anxious inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?"

Again, by vowing a life of celibacy, the design of God, in man's creation, is neutralised, inasmuch as the command of the all-wise Ruler of the universe is made void, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." In like manner the evidence of the inspired apostle is set at nought, "Marriage is honourable in all."* If in *all*, why not in persons making a particular profession of religion? or do they consider the practice of religion incompatible with the duties of a married life? If they do, the apostle Paul did not hold that opinion; for he could see no reason why even a bishop should not be a married man. He thus writes: "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife." And, again, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"† Likewise, in making mention of the qualities necessary for a deacon, the inspired penman says: "Let the deacon be

* Heb. xiii. 4.

† 1. Tim. iii. 2-5.

the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well."* Furthermore, in exhorting the female portion of the Christian church, the same apostle writes : " I will, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully, for some are already turned aside after Satan."† Why, then, does the Church of Rome prohibit all monastic and ecclesiastical persons from engaging in a matrimonial state? If it were really lawful, perfectly consistent, and orderly, in bishops and deacons to take unto themselves wives in the apostles' days, and up to the year 385, at which period, as Nicholas Cusanus acquaints us, Pope Symmachus first enjoined a life of celibacy on ecclesiastics,‡ although it was not effectually imposed on the clergy of the Eastern Church until about the close of the seventh century, nor fully established in the Roman Church until the year 1074, by Pope Gregory VII.§—why not now? If it were lawful in those days of primitive

* 1. Tim. iii. 12.

† 1. Tim. v. 14-15.

‡ Post Aliquot tempora visum est. &c. Nichol. Cusan. Ep. 2. ad Boem.

§ Non ante Pontificatum Gregorii VII. Anno 1074, connubium adimi sacerdotibus occidentalibus potuit. Polydor. Virg. de invent. ver. 1. 5. c. 4.

fervour and simplicity, why should any mandate or ordinance of popes or councils forbid what neither our blessed Lord nor his apostles condemned or disallowed, but, contrariwise, considered as perfectly reconcilable with the exalted character and mission of a Christian pastor? Fearfully does the prediction of the apostle apply to that church which blasphemously detracts from, and “renders of none effect the word of God” by human traditions: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall *depart from the faith*, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking *lies in hypocrisy*; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; **FORBIDDING TO MARRY!**”* Well may we retort upon those who would endeavour to force such a despotic doctrine upon us, in the language of Ambrose, who flourished in the fourth century:—“*Quæ in Scripturis sanctis non reperimus, ea quemadmodum usurpare possumus?*” “How can we adopt those things which we do not find in the Holy Scriptures?”† Or, in the words of Cyril of Alexandria, who was contemporaneous with the former, Ο γὰρ ἐκ εἰρηκεν ἡ θεία γραφή, τίνα δε

* 1 Tim. iv. 1-3.

† De Officiis Minist. lib. i. tom. ii. (Parisiis, 1690.)

τροπον παραδεξομεθα, και εν τοις αληθως εχσσι καταλογισμεθα ; “ For how shall we receive and reckon among the things that are true, that which the Scriptures have not said ?”*

Further—by making profession of a monastic life, children are, strange to say, exempted from the duty of parental obedience.

No obligation can possibly be more binding, no command of our Creator can be more imperative than that which appertains to obedience to parents. The eternal Ruler of the universe on promulgating his divine will to his creatures, places this command immediately after those which have a direct reference to himself, as one of paramount importance : “ Honour thy father and thy mother : that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”† The apostle Paul reiterates the divine injunction :—“ Children, obey your parents in the Lord : for this is right. Honour thy father and mother ; which is the first commandment with promise ; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”‡ And in his summary of the marks of the apostacy, *disobedience to parents* takes a very prominent position.§

* Cyril. Glaphyr. in Gen. lib. 2. (Lutetiae. 1638.)

† Exod. xx. 12.

‡ Ephes. vi. 1-3.

§ 2 Tim. iii. 2.

The Council of Trent has established many rules for the regulation and government of monasteries, and commends them as being receptacles of religious perfection. Hence, several are foolishly induced to enter those institutions in pursuit of happiness, and to say virtually to their parents "it is a gift (to the church) by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;"* but in the end, and not unfrequently when it is too late to attempt to free themselves from the grasp of their spiritual rulers, they are brought to see and regret the rash act which bound them to their cloister, as well as the vanity of pursuing the *ignus fatuus* of monastic felicity! The most eminent Romish writers attempt to justify disobedience to parents, when the cloister is the bent of a child's inclination.

St. Alphonsus Ligouri says, most emphatically, that if children believe they have a vocation or calling to a religious state, they are not required to *await* their parents' permission, nor even to *ask* such, if they have reason to believe they would meet with a refusal. And for the encouragement of those who have, in opposition to the will of their parents, entered a monastic life, he details several melancholy circumstances connected with

* Matt. xv. 5.

persons who once wore the monastic habit, but were induced, from parental affection, to return to the world.* It is quite evident that this doctrine is in accordance with the teaching of the Church of Rome from the fact, that all the writings of Ligouri were pronounced, by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, "undeserving of censure!" which sentence, moreover, was ratified by the infallible testimony of Pius VII.

It is stated in a work of high authority, written by the celebrated Rodriguez, a Spanish Jesuit, that if parents should chance to lie in the way, or become an impediment to children, anxious to embrace a "religious life," as the monkish profession is unduly termed, "*they should walk over them*!"*

I remember, upon one occasion, conversing with a distinguished dignitary of the Church of Rome, on the propriety of engaging in the monastic profession, in opposition to the will of my mother. He stated to me, that were he similarly circumstanced, he should, indeed, solicit the parental blessing, but it would be a matter of indifference to him whether he should receive a blessing or a

* Ligouri's Treatise on the Love of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar.

* Rod. Christ. Perfect. vol. ii.

curse A Roman Catholic bishop also assured me that I was not under the necessity of complying with the parental demand! Thus it is that the word of God is set at nought by the Church of Rome and her lying teachers; for she has adopted the very same evasion of the fifth commandment, for which our Lord condemned the Jews of old! And in obedience to her teaching, the superior of the Nunnery at Montreal, persuaded a novice to take the veil in opposition to the will of her mother: "*Les droits de nos parens ne sont pas devant les droits de notre religion. Quand les droits de la religion sont concernés, les droits de la nature consent.*"*

"Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou shew'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster!"

"In my Virgo *Μισγαμος*," says Erasmus, "I hold up to reprobation those who entice young lads and girls, against their parents' wills, into monasteries, abusing their simplicity or superstition, and persuading them that there is no chance of salvation but in a monastery. If the world were not full of such anglers; if countless promising minds have not been most wretchedly buried alive in such

* Slocum. Confirm. p. ii. pp. 11, 12.

places, which might have been chosen vessels of the Lord ; then I have been wrong in my reprehensions. But if ever I am forced to speak out what I feel upon this subject, I will so paint the portrait of those kid-nappers, and so represent the magnitude of the evil, that every one shall confess that I have not been wrong in my reprehensions, though I have not represented them with civility, lest I should afford a handle to the wicked.”*

I may close this already lengthened work, though the subject is far from being exhausted, by a quotation from Milton, who, in strong and sarcastic terms, exposes the assumed power of the Keys, and rails at the absurdity of a system, which keeps in bondage the misguided and deluded votaries of the Church of Rome :—

“ They who to be sure of Paradise,
Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised :
They pass the planets sev’n, and pass the fix’d,
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talk’d, and that first moved ;
And now Saint Peter at heav’n’s wicket seems
To wait them with his keys, and now at foot
Of heav’n’s ascent they lift their feet, when lo,
A violent cross wind from either coast
Blows them transverse ten thousand leagues awry
Into the devious air ; then might ye see

* De Colloq. Util.

Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tost
And flutter'd into rags ; then reliques, beads,
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
The sport of winds : all these upwhirl'd aloft
Fly o'er the backside of the world far off
Into a limbo large and broad, since call'd
The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
Long after, now unpeopled, and untrod.*

I have thus attempted, as briefly as possible, to give a condensed view of Monastic Institutions, and trust that there is nothing of obscurity in the statements I have made ; for I would regret exceedingly were the proverb, in the most remote degree, applicable to me, "*Brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio.*" The size of the work precluded a more enlarged view of the interesting subject which has occupied my pen ; and I was unwilling to swell the volume to a larger extent, with the many materials, however valuable, which the annals of the Church of Rome could furnish. My principal object has been to direct public attention to facts, and not to multiply cases, condemnatory of the principles of that corrupt communion. The end will have been accom-

* Paradise Lost, Book iii.

plished, if the few pages of this little work will have led the reader to view Monastic Institutions in their proper light, and to examine more minutely and attentively than he has, perhaps, hitherto done, the several instruments by which the Church of Rome has contrived to gain an ascendancy over the minds of the ignorant multitude, and to fix her throne so firmly in this unhappy country. There are, no doubt, defects of composition; and I must throw myself on the indulgence of the reader, pleading, as an excuse, a first attempt to commit my thoughts to paper:—

*“Cum relego, scripsisse pudet, quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque, qui feci, iudice, digna lini.”*

As to the authorities, brought forward in support of the positions I have laid down, I can truly say, that they have not been quoted, without a strict attention to the very words of the several authors to whom reference is made. I would further add, that in an attempt to draw a picture of the abuses which have crept into the Church of Rome from age to age, until it became an unsightly mass of deformity, I have cautiously avoided setting down any thing in malice, or magnifying errors and abominations, in them—

selves sufficiently gross, without any additional colouring.

I now stand at the bar of public opinion, and while I anticipate the candid and impartial judgment of those whose opinion is worthy of respect, I am prepared to encounter the calumniating tongue of slander, and to hear the persecuting cry of "Apostate" from those whose system I have ventured to expose. But while conscience bears testimony that my apostacy is from error to truth, "with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of man's judgment;" for "if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God."

APPEAL TO ROMAN CATHOLICS.

KNOWING now something of the worth of a pure Gospel, and a free Bible, I am most anxious that my Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen should also possess the same privilege, and enjoy the same liberty. I would then say to them, with all the ardour of affectionate zeal, suffer the word of exhortation. Educated for a long period within the pale of the Church of Rome, I considered her tenets, as able to save my soul, and her commands, as obligatory on my conscience. My manner of life from my youth up, to the period when I became the Lord's freeman, was in perfect accordance with the doctrines of a church, whose authority I would not presume to question. I was, in the true sense of the term, a strict Roman Catholic, considering that passive obedience on my part was a duty, the slightest breach of which would justly expose me to the merited censures of

the church of which I was a member. My allegiance to priestly domination remained unshaken, until the Lord was pleased to open my eyes, and to show me a better way. Having "acted ignorantly in unbelief, I obtained mercy;" and the work of free, unmerited, sovereign grace, was manifested in my deliverance from a bondage which had long kept my reasoning powers in chains, and deprived me of the exercise of thought—a blessing so graciously vouchsafed by the Divine Being, whose mercy is over all his works, to his accountable creatures. The scales fell from mine eyes, and the things which appertain to salvation were presented to my mind in quite a different light—"old things passed away, all things became new." I trust I was not disobedient to the heavenly guidance, but, like Saul, I was led to ask the all-important question, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" He, who had begun the good work, was pleased to carry it on, until the dictates of an enlightened conscience constrained me to desert the ranks of the Church of Rome, and to enrol myself as an humble soldier under the banner of the cross of Christ. I ventured to open the Bible—the forbidden book—and to examine with attention the contents of that hitherto mysterious volume. The result was, that I became more

established in my new opinions ; for I found that the Scriptures bore a decided testimony against the doctrines laid down, and dogmatically enforced, by the Church of Rome ; and that God's book condemned the lying fables and human inventions which I had been in the habit of considering as of divine authority. What else could I do but bow in submission to the voice of God, and reject the voice of a church, not spoken of in his word, except in the way of condemnation ? When once this change took place, I felt that I could not remain silent. The doctrines, forms, and ceremonies, which had been instilled into my mind, now appeared in their true character ; and having discarded them, not only as useless, but as dangerous, and destructive to the soul, the path of duty was clear ; and to exercise my pen against the errors and abominations of a monastic life assumed, in my mind, the force of a religious obligation. I have done so— and I now submit this little volume to your attentive perusal, trusting that it may be instrumental in leading you, under the divine blessing, to reject a system of religion, not sanctioned by the word of God.

Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen, this is a simple statement of my case ; and I may be allowed to add, it differs nothing from the expe-

rience of all conscientious persons who, having dared to judge for themselves, have been compelled to renounce the errors of a false creed, and to take the written word of God as the only safe "rule of faith." "My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved ;" that you may no longer give up your birth-right, as rational and accountable beings ; but that rejecting a blind obedience to men of like passions with yourselves, you may be constrained, by the influence of divine grace, to "search the Scriptures," and to find in them that peace, which neither priestly absolution, nor unbloody sacrifices, can possibly bestow !

" He is a freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside."

In leaving the ranks of the Church of Rome, I can with truth say, that in worldly matters I "suffered loss." Had I been even disposed to desert the crucifix for the cross, merely from lucrative motives, no door was, or is open, by which I could enter, with a sure and certain hope of finding out the road to preferment. It may be necessary to remark, that the charge of "bribery" against converts to Protestantism, is a mere trick to stop the progress of inquiry, and to excite popular indignation against those who have had

the moral courage to renounce the communion of the Church of Rome. "Converts," as they are termed, are so far from being loaded with "loaves and fishes" by the members of the Protestant Church, that they are rather looked upon with a suspicious eye ; and they are often placed in a most painful position, arising, on the one hand, from the hostility of the party they have forsaken ; and on the other, from the coldness and neglect of the party to which they have become attached.

I can safely appeal to the searcher of all hearts, who knows our most secret thoughts, that no worldly interest whatever has induced me to act so decided a part, in a matter involving the interests of eternity. It is painful to my feelings to be obliged to speak of myself, but I am compelled to do so ; for I am not ignorant that "converts from the Church of Rome" are always charged with being guilty of desertion from selfish and interested motives. The Lord having taught me a better way, I feel that the concerns of a never-dying soul are of the first importance. Influenced by this consideration, I trust I can fully appreciate the heart-searching question put by the Saviour of sinners :—"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ; or what shall a man give in

exchange for his soul?" This is my solemn conviction, and actuated by it, I address myself to you, my Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen; and I earnestly entreat of you to shake off the trammels by which you are bound, to go to the fountain head, the word of God, and to compare the tenets of your church with the doctrines laid down by Him in that infallible volume of inspiration. You have souls to be saved, as well as the humble individual who ventures to expostulate with you; lay aside, then, the "fear of man, which bringeth a snare"—prove all things by that unerring guide, the revelation of God's will, and "hold fast that which is good." You have reason to suspect that man of unworthy motives, however learned and exalted in rank he may be, who would tell you, that the "written word" is insufficient for man's salvation. Does he not arraign the wisdom, justice, and mercy, of our heavenly Father, when he ventures to question the sufficiency of "the oracles of God" without the addition of the "unwritten word" of sinful and fallible man? As rational and accountable creatures, I call upon you to assert your right to the possession and perusal of that word, which contains the charter of your salvation—the title-deed of your heavenly inheritance. I call upon you to examine the

doctrines of your creed by that word—to examine them as men, who are deliberating for eternity ; whose everlasting welfare depends on your arriving at a saving knowledge of the true faith. Receive the affectionate admonition of one who can have no other object in view in addressing you but the good of your immortal souls. “ I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say.” And may the same divine Teacher who, I trust, has graciously opened my eyes to see “ the truth as it is in Jesus,” vouchsafe to confer on you also the same blessed privilege, to ‘turn you from the darkness of error and superstition, and “ to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Amen !

“ ————— nor distant far,
Perhaps, those days of blessings are,
When superstition's sable night
Shall yield to truth's convincing light ;
The blind no longer lead the blind,
Till both one dreadful ruin find :
The Bible freely spread abroad,
Shall tell the wondrous love of God.
Praise and salvation, hand in hand,
Shall walk the border's of our land,
And sounds of violence no more
Be heard, on Erin's tranquil shore.”

THE END.

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